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PAMPHLETS  
ON

THE COUNTRY CHURCH

THE  
COUNTRY  
CHURCH

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Volume 3

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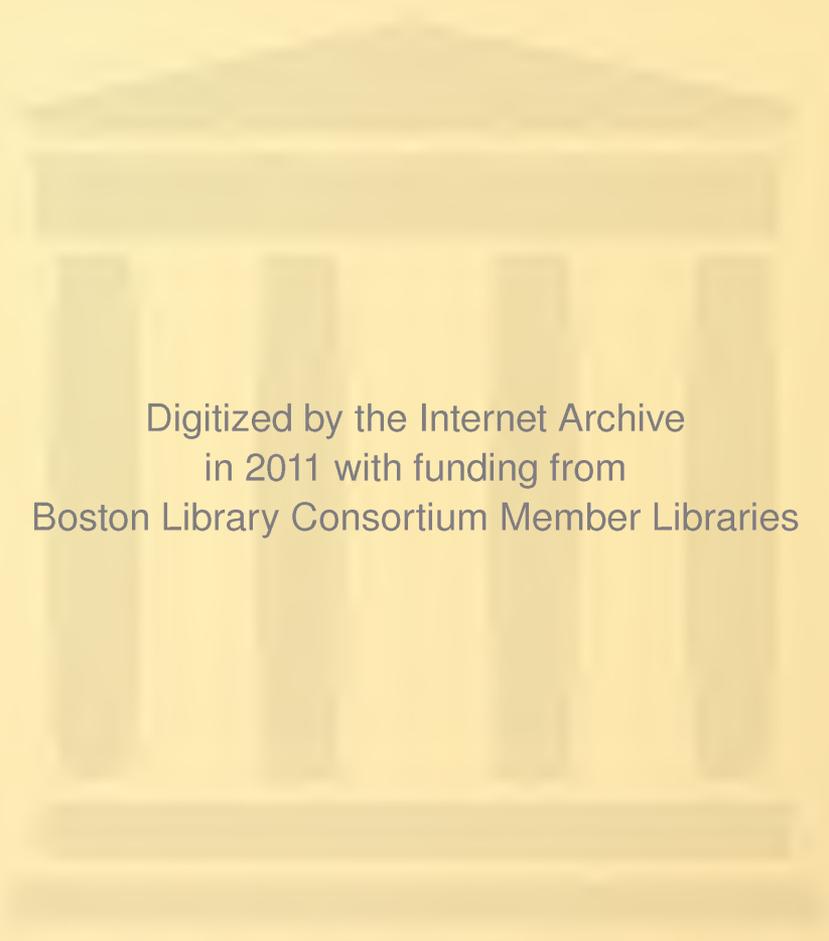
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The church and country life. Pamphlet issued  
by the Board of Home Missions of the Presby-  
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# COUNTRY CHURCH WORK



**THE RURAL EVANGEL**

BOARD OF HOME MISSIONS  
OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE U.S.A.  
156-5TH AVE. NEW YORK





## A COUNTRY CHURCH

BY JEANNIE PENDLETON EWING

Clear-eyed and prim, with walls of white  
 Among the leaves of birch  
 That tinged but did not stem the light,  
 Nestled the little church,  
 All summer open to the air  
 And all that green a-quiver there.

About were tender, dreamy sounds:  
 The stamp of horses' feet,  
 The mumbly bees upon their rounds  
 Where clover nodded sweet,  
 A piping quail—the grain low-bent  
 Showed where her furtive flutterings  
 went.

*Used by courtesy of the Youth's Companion*

Next father in the pew's long row  
 Came urchins sternly shod;  
 Next mother—for she planned it so—  
 The child who first would nod,  
 Laying, when sermon-time oppressed,  
 His poppy cheek upon her breast.

Bare stretched your aisle and long your  
 hour  
 To many a childish wight,  
 Wee church! yet, rich in holy power,  
 You blessed as angels might  
 Long years have gone—our faith is true:  
 Long years we've prayed, because of you!



# The Rural Evangel

*A Gospel for Every Man Must Be a Gospel for All*

## Obstacles to Rural Evangelism

### What Limits the Rural Evangel

WARREN H. WILSON

**O**F all the churches the country church is the most faithful in preaching the gospel. The country minister organizes his work so as to deliver the message in the greatest number of places. Yet the returns from country churches show a lesser proportion of conversions and accessions to the church than are reported from the city churches.

The shrinkage in rural population is not a sufficient reason for this arrested evangelism. Growth of country churches attends both the increase and the decrease in the population.

The first obstacle to the growth of the country church is a static condition of the country community. When things are at a standstill religious growth is arrested. The country neighborhood for the gospel's sake needs new businesses.

Second, the divisions among Christians stand in the way of conversion of individuals. There is a sort of covenant of peace between religious sects at the present time. Revivals are held by consent and the community goes to them, but there is a strict code as to the division of the names of those converted. This condition is the result of years of denominational agitation. The dead interests of the past rule the work of the present. The country church needs a gospel of practical unity. One of its ripest fruits will be a great revival of re-

ligion among country people in the early future.

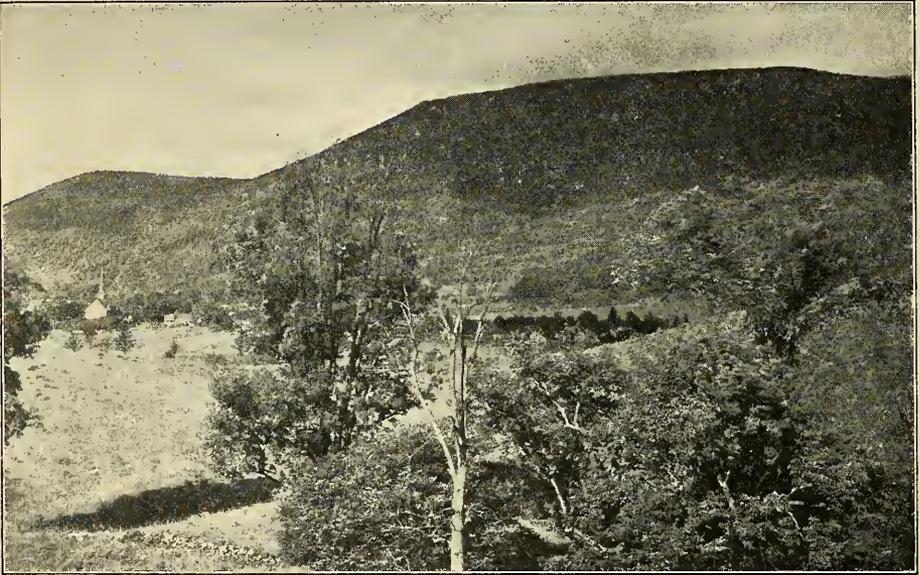
Third, the engrossment of farmers in economic affairs at the present time is due to a crisis severe and critical, but while it lasts religious matters wait. It is profoundly important that the ministers understand this severe strain under which the farmer is laboring, for the man who bears the burden needs the comfort, and the guidance, not merely for the future world, but for the present struggle and the immediate need. It is important that, as the Old Testament preachers did, the modern preacher shall interpret the divine message to the needs of the people in an economic crisis.

Fourth, there is great unrest and discontent with country life on the part of women and young people, which causes them to think of moving from the country. This keeps many people away from the church and lifts their interest out of the parish. Evangelism will not be fully successful until a new way of country living is taught and new ideals are furnished, with new machinery for satisfaction and profit in the country home.

Fifth, many country people are tenants. In some communities half the population, in others more than half; in some states as many as sixty-five per cent. of the farmers are renters. In all states the customary

lease of the farm tenant is one year. This means that about half of the farmers in America move once in five years. A harder situation than this could not confront the gospel. The gospel as it is shown in the Ohio survey, has about half the power of access to the tenant that it has to the farm owner. European nations are attempting by law to transform a farm renter into an owner. Until this is accomplished both in America and in Europe, the country church will require stronger men and the use of more

churches, which like the Presbyterian, believe in a resident pastor, in an organized body of work, in the diligent training of the young, in catechizing and schooling the whole congregation, these churches have to compete with denominations which use less thorough methods. Presbyterian congregations have surrendered their heritage and given over the ministry which is theirs by tradition. Except in the older states the Presbyterian Church is not organized. Its pastors do not live with the people. Its presbyteries have



WAY OFF IN THE MOUNTAINS POINTING COUNTRY FOLK HOMEWARD

abundant missionary funds than the city churches employ.

Facing these obstacles there is a sixth; namely, the inferior organization of the rural church. The Sunday schools are poor. The ministers are often absentees. As a rule they preach, especially in some representative denominations, not by the Sabbath, but by the month, returning once in two or in four Sundays to the meeting house for whose worship they are responsible.

So long as the churches were missionary and looked forward to improvement, this condition was tolerable; but now it means contentment with little, satisfaction with inferiority.

Many country people defend this system as being the full expression of the gospel. The

no authority. Its congregations are independent in government, emotional by preference in religious expression, and deliberately inefficient so far as church work goes.

Seventh, a great obstacle to the preaching of the Word of God is in the low utility of the gospel preached. Some ministers insist that the test of utility should not be applied. Most farmers and other country people, on the contrary, are strenuously devoted to the adaptation of means to ends. Country life is undergoing a radical reconstruction and every institution must be tested for its value in satisfying needs. The people are hungry, they are weary, they need comfort, and the gospel preached to them does not encourage, does not strengthen them for the day's work. So long as the pulpits in the country ignore

the religious character of the struggle through which the farmer is going, the farmer will not in large numbers express his religious feeling through church membership. The men whose hearts God has touched will not join the church.

The Master commended His gospel by its utilitarian features when He described it to John the Baptist. He commanded His followers to preach a gospel of utility when He told them to feed the sheep. Country people need a church that is open to all the interests of the community. They need every-day religion, such as is written into the Bible. They need an idealism that glorifies the hard work of the day, a hope that redeems the sordid business of the week and makes it noble and divine. All this sordid and toilsome country labor is divinely interpreted in the Bible, but too often it is thought unpracticable and is spiritualized. It needs to be brought back again to daily use.

The last obstacle to evangelism is the dimmed inspiration of the Bible, which is a book luminous to the farmer's eyes. Many passages which define country life and labor are used for burial services; others are ig-

nored, because they offer no handle for allegorical or figurative arousement of emotion. They do not appeal to the fancy. Yet the people in church need matter of fact, plain teaching about animals and soil and work; about sex and sorrow and love and birth and death. They need to be taught something that will prepare them for the day, as food does. It is all in the Bible, with no interpreter. The fact that the plain message of Scripture is ignored has much to do with the indifference of country people to the evangel.

We do not need something new. We need to realize what we have. The most traditional and conservative minister should put his heart into what he believes, and he will be at once the most successful country minister. We have gone after so many fancy and emotional ideals in religion that we do not remember the efficiency of the Protestant Church, which is the divinely given institution for the service of the people living in small communities. We need a belief in the Church as the body of Christ, "the Bride of the Lamb," "the pillar and ground of the truth."

## The Village Monopoly of the Gospel

LUCIEN V. RULE

### I.

THE subject assigned me in this symposium is, "The Village Monopoly of the Gospel," which, as the editor has suggested, signifies, "The tendency of the village to monopolize ministers and churches and schools to draw the best minds out of the country, giving them no spirit of service which would send them back into the country as evangelists, teachers and leaders of the people."

We have dealt with that very tendency and condition in Brownstown and Crothersville, Indiana, where I am pastor, and where, as chairman of the Social Service and Country Life Committee of our presbytery, it is my business to find a way out of such difficulties. We have succeeded notably, by the blessing of God and the fine leadership discovered to us right on the field, and ours are small, struggling churches.

In Brownstown and Crothersville, with a population of 2,000 and 1,200 respectively, the inevitable denominational rivalry formerly tended to hold the local pastors in town, "to keep up the churches" and to thresh over the same old material in religious revivals year after year. The social life of the young people was sadly neglected or, worse still, put under strict prohibition by some parents and preachers. Separation and division were preached and practiced in both town and country, which only embittered the denominational rivalry already existing.

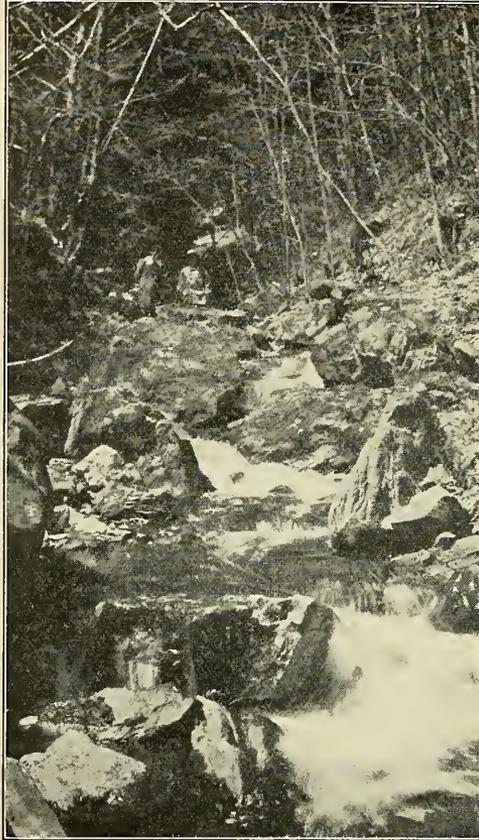
In the midst of this narrow sectarianism, Preston Rider, founder of the Presbyterian church at Crothersville, got up a big national flag of boys and girls from all the Sunday schools of the township, years ago, on the Fourth of July at the fair grounds. The little folks were arranged in groups and lines to represent the Stars and Stripes, and a

splendid photograph was taken of them all. It was the greatest picnic ever given in those parts and gave a new spirit of brotherhood to six hundred young people.

Mr. Rider was very resourceful and big-hearted in organizing and planning something that everybody could enjoy. He first brought enterprise and co-operation into the business life of the town, and then he lifted his church forever above selfishness and bigotry by making it serve the community. His successor today in Crothersville, Clyde Keach, Superintendent of the Presbyterian Sunday school, has engineered both town and country to a new social relationship and a new community neighborliness. The town meeting and the public assemblage, either for business or pleasure, got the people together, and the thing was done.

## II.

Of course this message had to come from the pulpit, and the Presbyterian church seven years ago took the lead. The High School did the work in an educational way through Prof. O. O. White, who, as one of his pupils truly said, "Introduced the new social life into the old religious atmosphere." All the churches duly fell in line, and when the Boy and Girl Scout movement was organized the rising generation left the old prejudices forever behind. You cannot discover an atom of sectarianism in the young people of Crothersville today who received the training of the Scout work. They will work anywhere



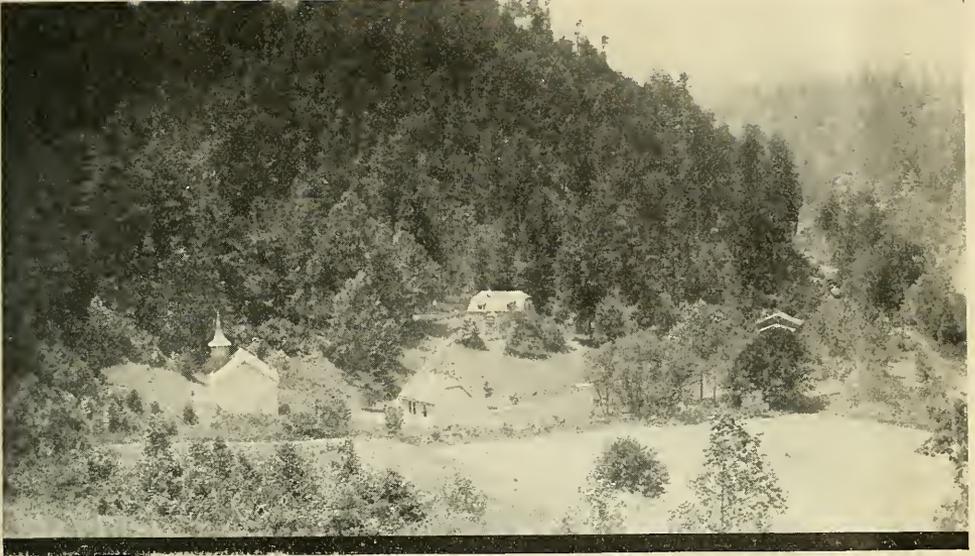
BY BABBLING BROOK

you assign them.

The Copper Bottom Sunday school and Neighborhood church near Crothersville is a yet more remarkable success. Mr. Leonard Gillaspay was its day school teacher for years, and for years he has been the teacher of two splendid Bible classes every Sunday, one at the Crothersville Presbyterian Church at ten a. m. and at Copper Bottom at three p. m. He reorganized both schools in a thoroughly modern way and is such a noble incarnation of the country life movement that Home Mission leaders in two presbyteries have made him flattering offers to give his whole time to the work.

Leonard Gillaspay is a young farmer and a college man and a born community leader. You will find him on spring days between the plow handles, for, like Gideon Blackburn, he thinks and studies in the open. He draws his illustrations from life and experience. The farmers in his neighborhood quit going to church because they got tired of sectarianism and hungered for the gospel of brotherhood. Gillaspay lived it and taught it and they turned the Copper Bottom school-house into a little temple where they all meet together Sunday afternoons to study and talk about the Word of Life and the Father-Friend. You can often see the moist eye and the quivering lip as this young teacher talks to his big grown-up pupils.

Gillaspay is the finest day school institute instructor in Jackson County. He broke down the old lingering prejudice against the



THE UPLIFTING CENTRE OF A FAR-STRETCHED COUNTRY SIDE

consolidated High School in Crothersville. No teacher in the county has made more of poor, backward, disheartened pupils than he. His sympathy and patience are proverbial. He holds his institutes in town at the High School and draws thither the parents and teachers from all over the township. Quarterly all-day meetings and dinners cement the educational and community spirit. He worked hand in hand with Prof. White till the good task was accomplished.

### III.

It was inevitable that these community movements would take on an organized fraternal form. The churches and lodges became imbued with the new spirit and the Social Crusaders were instituted to express it

amongst the young people. The Crothersville Epworth League became inter-denominational as a result and a new socialized Christian Endeavor sprang up in the Presbyterian church. National holidays, religious anniversaries, neighborhood reunions and family festivals have recovered the old time good will and fellowship when the country was new and people dependent upon each other. Men like Gillaspay are born fraternity leaders. They make social and religious institutions stand for what they profess; and the new time has already manifested itself in these communities. You will have to be on the ground to get into the spirit of it; but these men, and many noble women we have not named, have already laid the foundation for the kingdom in their midst.

## Shepherding a Scattered Flock

LOWRIE D. CORY

I HAVE often wondered how rapid would be the growth of the churches in our cities, and how steady would be the development in spiritual things of the members of city churches, if the same conditions prevailed which exist in so many of our country districts. And the question is more insistent

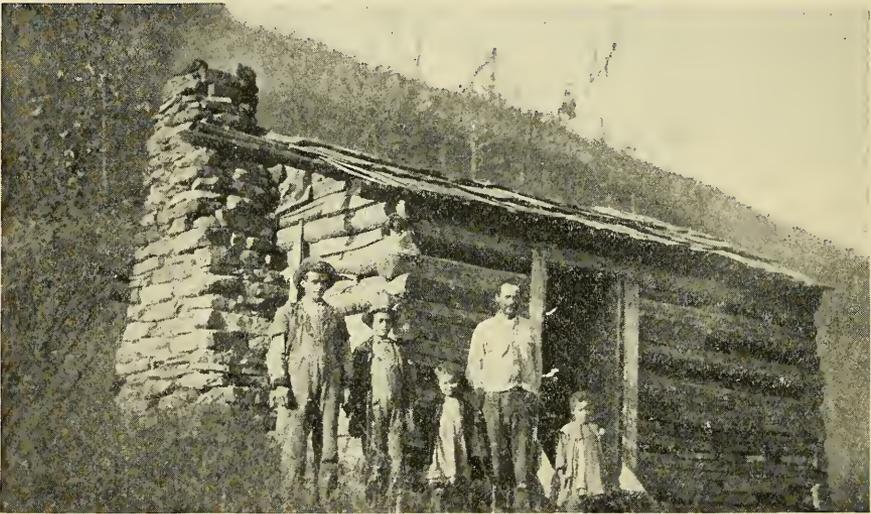
in my own mind from personal knowledge of the city church, with its many organizations and equipment for large service. How long would that city church survive which had a service but once a month. Would the members of that city church prize more highly the occasional service, or fall into the easy

habit of so many others of non-attendance. And what large opportunity that city pastor would have to exercise his talents to develop his people at the same ratio, if instead of hearing him fifty or an hundred times, besides prayer meeting, he should have but twelve opportunities in the year to break to them the Bread of Life.

Yet that is the situation in more than one country parish in our land, and is the prevailing condition in the work of all the de-

strikes at some point on the earth and makes its impression felt. Or to change the figure, the shepherd is not so much interested in seeing how many miles he can travel with his flock in the course of the day, but in finding the best pasture and the best watering places.

Other things unite with such conditions to hinder the progress of the gospel. The roads in many of these country parishes are in



AN HUMBLE HOME IN THE COUNTRY SIDE

nominations represented in this work in this mountain region of Western North Carolina. The pastor who has charge of but one church is the exception. And not a few preach twice every Sunday in the month, and face a different congregation at each service. And there are a few communities which have a regular service only on a fifth Sunday, which means but four times in the year.

The plea may be made that in this way one is able to cover larger territory and bring more people within the hearing of the gospel. But the best results are not always from diffusion of power. The sheet lightning only lights up the heavens for a brief moment of time. But the chain, or forked, lightning

many cases only places where roads ought to be, and even in this respect judgment has not always been used, and at times our "circuit rider" finds the roads well-nigh impassable. Also in many cases the salary does not permit our shepherd of the out-lying district to provide himself with almost the first tool of his trade, a horse, a mule, or, where the roads permit, an automobile. He has but two choices, to depend on the mercy of those who will lend or hire him a horse, or walk. Neither is he always certain that the weather will permit a large congregation to gather, even though he make it known by word and practice that no weather shall hinder him in meeting his appointment.

Out of such conditions certain hindrances arise, which may be briefly stated.

1. There is a lack of trained leadership. Much might be accomplished by the utilization of the lay forces, if such forces could be made available.

2. Lack of intimate knowledge of the people in their homes and at their work. The message suffers and the pastor and people alike suffer from the lack of the vital touch.

3. Aggressive evangelistic work must, in the main, be reserved for revival services

feeling of responsibility in meeting the financial obligations of the church. It is difficult to appeal to the idea of *systematic* giving.

Too much praise cannot be given to those faithful community workers, who, acting as pastor's assistants in the work of our church, are, among other things, doing much to secure regularity of services, especially through the Sunday-school.

Perhaps, in closing, a chapter from one Sunday in such a pastor's life will be interesting. Like Samuel Johnson, this pastor



WASH DAY

instead of through individual work. The tendency of these meetings, heretofore, has been almost harmful, in the appeal that has been made to the emotions, and the inability to throw around the young Christian an atmosphere conducive to growth. The top soil has been scratched over so many times that the fertilizing element has all been used, and the response is now meagre. A deeper stirring is needed, and in some cases only dynamite will suffice to break the crust.

4. Division of forces breeds a lack of the

must be an early riser on Sunday morning. There follow in order Sunday-school and church services in his home town. Then he must hurry through dinner, and be off—this time on a borrowed mule—not later than 1.30 for another appointment five miles away. No time is allowed him for rest, digestion of his dinner or collection of his scattered thoughts. And today he is especially anxious to be early on the field, because the sudden death of one of the members of the church at this point on Friday may bring the funeral service at

the hour of the regular service. On the way he stops but a moment at the house of one for whom he is trying to secure a patent for a useful discovery to leave word that no news had as yet come whether the application had been favorably passed on. Ten minutes before the hour for preaching he arrives at the school-house where the services are held, where desks are the pews, and finds that it was necessary to hold the funeral service in the morning, a minister nearer at hand having been called in to conduct the service. A few minutes rest and he faces a good congregation for the preaching service of the afternoon. After the service a bite to eat at

the board of the community worker, while certain things of interest in the community are discussed, and Cradle Roll certificates signed. Then a ride of half a mile farther, and his mule must be tied while he climbs straight up the side of the mountain 1,000 feet or more, in the still blazing sunshine, to the home just bereaved of the husband and father. Then back to home and wife and baby in the gathering dusk, stopping for a word with some one on the road, or a chat at a house, reaching town just as the union service of the evening is beginning, which he must miss this time, and which he is glad it is not his Sunday to conduct.

## The Stay-at-Home Women

MARGARET B. BARNARD

A LADY living in the city asked me some years ago why so many people in the country did not go to church, and seemed much surprised when I replied that they failed to go for very much the same reasons that city people lost the habit. Human nature in city and country is much alike, but the environment will influence the nature of the act, and create different causes for the same effect. Church going is, after all, more or less a habit, and if circumstances prevent attendance for a time, one is very apt to drift, and to feel that the hour of worship is not so essential as it once seemed.

There are four prominent reasons why women acquire the stay-at-home-from-church habit in the country:

I. Young women who may have been accustomed to attend church and even to be actively interested in all Christian work, marry, and for a short time keep up the church-going habit. Then the babies come. There is no one with whom to leave them. The mother must stay at home, and the father falls into the way of staying at home with her. By the time the children are old enough to go also, the custom of church attendance is unhappily lost. It is a great effort to get up, dress the children, do the work and "I guess I won't go today," ends the subject. Gradually an indifference is developed which is very difficult to overcome, for we are seldom interested in things to which we do not contribute by money or personal effort.

II. Supposing that the mother, after her children are large enough, desires to attend church, she is often delayed or prevented by the lack of clothes. In a city or town, given the money, one can go to a store and buy the necessary articles. In the country it is very different. A woman must consult a catalogue from a mail order house, make out the order carefully, then wait till there is a chance to go to the post-office for a money order,—it may be several days,—and after that bide in patience the action of the mails. All this delay is inevitable if there is ready money, but often in the country there is a lack of that commodity when the family is not really suffering. So she must bide her time until the sale of some farm product brings the necessary cash, and the desire, which was very real in the beginning, dies out, and even the arrival of the clothes does not revive it.

III. A third difficulty is distance. The church is often three or four miles from home, and bad roads at certain seasons of the year make the trip a long one. Unless one is deeply religious, or very enthusiastic, this obstacle is a serious one. Then again if the husband does not wish to go, there may be no horse which the woman can drive, or, in many cases the horses are too tired after their week's work to be taken out, and the longing for church and companionship is again denied.

IV. After giving due credit to these very material, but very practical reasons, it is foolish to deny that our churches have not

touched the community life as they should. The country ministers have too often been men without training, or men who have failed elsewhere. They have not commanded the respect of the people, and nothing so injures the position of the church as the un-Christian life of those who represent it. If ministers or elders or deacons fail in the every-day virtues of honesty, justice, truth, we need not wonder that a prejudice is created which has a very close connection with the stay-at-home habit in men and women.

These are a few general reasons for non-attendance. Can we do anything to remedy them? I believe so. While our country church must stand for the vital truths of Christianity, while its first duty is to inspire the spirit of pure, sincere worship, and make God a living fact in the lives of all who come under its influence, it cannot attain success even here unless it also seeks to serve the people, in their every-day needs. Some of our city churches have a kindergarten for the little children during the church hour, so that the mothers and fathers may have a chance for the rest and refreshment that is their due. The country church needs this also, and it would be a great boon to many tired parents. But the country church is so poor that it cannot afford this luxury, some will say! The knowledge of the need will often pave the way to the achievement.

The church cannot eliminate distance. It can throw its influence, however, in favor of the good roads movement, and so overcome one of the difficulties in the way of church-going. Then, too, it can carry its services to the people. Dr. Persons, of Cazenovia, N. Y., is a notable example of such splendid work. So the Congregational Home Mission



GATHERING SPRING BEAUTIES

ary Society in Massachusetts has been a valuable factor in this way. It has planted its Gospel tents in many neglected localities, and has reached people who had become indifferent, and heedless of their own religious needs and obligations.

As to supporting the church, very few women in the country handle much money themselves. Among the more progressive farmers, the wife's work is receiving recognition financially and otherwise, but there are still many of the old-fashioned kind who keep their wives in economic dependence, and it is only by chance that such women have occasionally a few dollars they may call their own. Therefore while women maintain a large proportion of the churches by their religious activity and their

devoted labor, they are not always in a position to pay the bills except through the sewing meetings and cake sales.

There is no one harder to arouse than the confirmed stay-at-home, be it man or woman, but like St. Paul, our churches must learn to be all things to all men and women. If the call of the Sunday morning church bell awakens no response, it may be that a mother's club will arouse interest. Talks on the woman's side of country life, her problems and difficulties, may succeed when the missionary meeting alone will not. A vital interest in the woman's life, a sympathy for her loneliness and isolation, a hearty endeavor to help in practical ways, will bring her a revelation of what religion really is—that it is not only creed, but deed, that it is not only believing about Jesus, but it is living the Christ life, that it is not merely attending church, but it is making the life of the entire community safer, cleaner, nobler,—a Christian commonwealth.

# Converting the Community

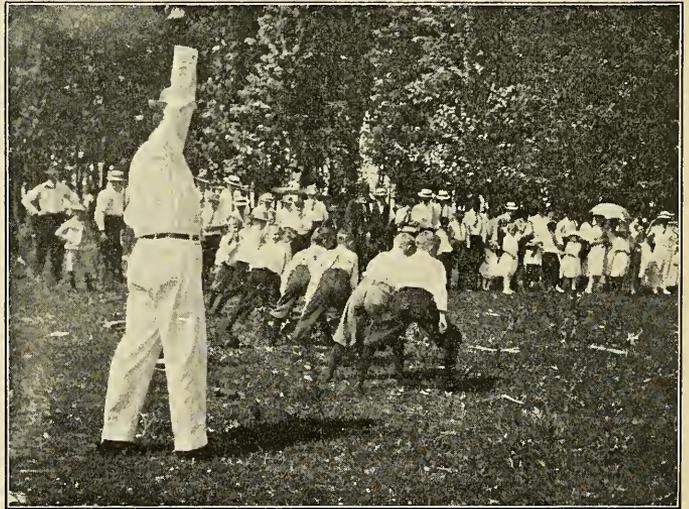
## Converting the Neighborhood

FRED EASTMAN

BY converting the neighborhood I mean getting a new spirit into it. The average rural village in this country insists that it is the most "peculiar" spot on earth, that wonderful things might be done in other places but "not in *this* town." To put in the place of this spirit a spirit of pride in the neighborhood, to put neighborly friendliness and co-operation in the place of suspicion and independence, to get the "new-comers" and "old-timers" alike to look upon the community as their own, *belonging to them both*, and as a place where it is good to live—this is to convert the neighborhood. Not until a community has this atmosphere can the church as an institution do its best work.

I would like to use our own village and church as a concrete example, claiming neither that we are typical nor that we have had any tremendous success. But we feel that we have made progress and our experience may be helpful to others. Two years ago our community spirit was at low ebb. It was a spirit of "knocking" and of suspicion and of antagonism to any co-operative effort. I remember about that time at a public meeting one of the old-timers said that "this town was called Locust Valley because there were so many low cusses in it." The membership of our church was 22 and the total yearly budget \$600, and this in spite of the fact that an excellent preacher had been serving the church every Sunday. There was in this town, however, one live and active organization. It was a Neighbor-

hood Association, made up largely of the wealthy summer residents who were for the most part men of big minds and broad public spirit. This organization had accomplished many splendid things for the community, but it had secured as yet little co-operation from the majority of the village people. The work of the association had grown so extensively that it was considering the employment of a secretary on full time. The church happened to be in need of a minister through the resignation on account of ill-health of the pastor at that time. I was called to occupy the dual



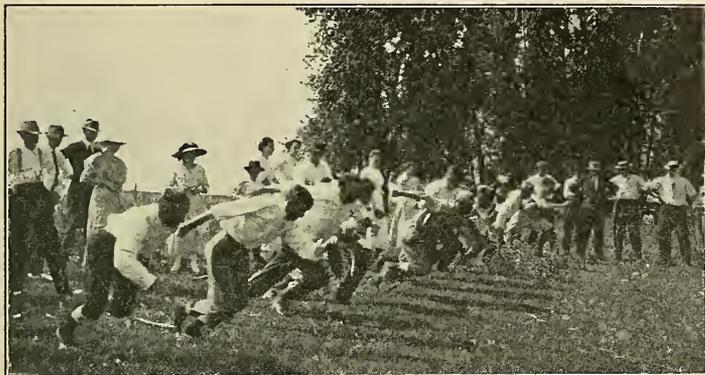
SPORTS FOR THE LITTLE FELLOWS

position of pastor of the church and secretary of the Neighborhood Association.

After a talk with the members of our church and with the directors of the Neighborhood Association, we were all agreed that if we were going to make the church a live church we had better begin by making the community a live community. We resolved to make the church serve the community in any

practical way that it could. We would preach no sermons on why people ought to go to church. We would preach rather sermons on how the religion of loving one's neighbor as oneself could be *applied* to the problems of good roads and better schools and clean recreations.

A few months after we started we held a New Year's Day resolution service and adopt-



THEY ARE OFF! WORKING TO HOLD THE BOY

ed individually and as a congregation the following resolutions:

*To co-operate with my neighbors this year to the following ends:*

*To construct a large building for such community purposes as public recreation, library, concerts, lecture courses, gymnasium, club rooms and fire department.*

*To properly maintain our roads.*

*To bring producer and consumer in this vicinity closer together in some sort of co-operative enterprise.*

*To secure cheaper lights.*

*To improve the appearance of the neighborhood by proper disposal of rubbish, by the construction of sidewalks, by planting, and by beautifying all properties in which I have any interest.*

*To aid the school board and the public school teachers in every progressive effort.*

*To stick to these undertakings until they are accomplished, giving of my time and money as I am able, and doing all for the public good.*

A copy of these resolutions was tacked up in every place of business in the village and remained there during the following year. Each copy was signed by the proprietor. Many

copies were tacked up in homes; some were framed.

Our Neighborhood Association and our church together have worked to get these resolutions fulfilled. We have failed to construct sidewalks and we have failed to bring producers and consumers closer together. But the community building has been built at a cost of about \$30,000. Much voluntary labor was used in its construction. Our roads have been better maintained than ever before. We have secured cheaper lights. We have improved the appearance of our neighborhood. We have consolidated the music of our community under a music secretary. We have done what we could to aid the public school and to bring happiness into the lives of the school children and the teach-

ers by automobile rides, picnics, and by special services in the church. Better than all these, however, a spirit of pride in the community and of neighborly friendliness is growing day by day. Our Neighborhood Association has done far more than our church in accomplishing these results, but our church has *helped* secure them by constant emphasis upon the need of them and by individual and collective co-operation with the committees of the Neighborhood Association.

And what has been the result upon the church of its giving itself to the practical welfare of the community? The march of our church has been no triumphal procession along the path of progress. There have been many times when we who are working in it were almost ready to give up. And yet looking back over our work we see signs of a new life appearing all along the way. A few weeks after we began our agitation for an organization to furnish clean recreations one of the young men of the neighborhood came to me asking if I would reserve a few pews in church for "some of the fellows." I told him I would gladly reserve the whole church. We reserved a couple of pews along

the side aisle. The following Sunday they filled those two and two more. We have not been able to hold these young men steadily, but they appear spasmodically in groups and at nearly all special services. Our membership has more than quadrupled. When we began our membership was 22. Now it is 92. Our attendance has increased proportionately. Nearly every young man who was employed on the Neighborhood building last

winter joined the church this spring. There are about 15 of these. Our budget is now \$3,000 a year. In our pews we find "old timers" and "new-comers" sitting side by side. We find wealthy summer residents and the employees on their estates singing out of the same hymn-books. We feel that as a church we have tested and found true the Master's saying, "He that loseth his life for my sake and the Gospel's shall save it."



BESIDE QUIET WATERS

## Christianizing Rural Business

ALBERT E. ROBERTS

**I**T is both interesting and encouraging to note the remarkable advance in the application of the principles of pure and undefiled religion in business. Men everywhere are hungry for it but, it is especially noticeable among those whose interests are rural socially or commercially. Even among those who fail to appreciate the mission of the church and who consequently support it only nominally if at all, there is abundant recognition of the principle of unselfish service as laid down in the teachings of Jesus. Moreover, so-called non-Christian men appre-

ciate the fact that a practical application of these principles is impossible unless there be more than a human motive.

The principal point of attack of the enemies of co-operation is that "as an ideal the scheme may be all right, but human nature is too selfish to work the plan, and that even among professing Christians self-interest is much stronger than altruism." There may be reason for this criticism, but the fact remains that every successful co-operative enterprise has been based on a religious motive and there is gradually dawning on the con-

sciousness of the people of this country the truth that real satisfactions of life are secured through application of the golden rule in business. An interesting side light on the enquiry of the American Commission for the study of rural credits, agriculture and country life in European countries was the fact that practically every scheme of betterment that was working out to the advantage of country people economically or socially originated in the minds and hearts of men and women whose sole ambition was to help and not exploit the rural people. Furthermore, they had no social, political or commercial axes to grind and therefore were obliged to tread the path of the pioneer—in some cases to suffer social and political ostracism. They were regarded as impractical idealists but because their motives were more than human they never wavered. Their spirit was contagious and their followers are actuated by the same motive.

David Lubin, the United States representative to the International Institute of Agriculture at Rome, told the writer that his philosophy was based on the prophecy of Isaiah, that the time should come when the swords should be beaten into ploughshares and the spears into pruning hooks—in other words, that agriculture should be the medium through which the nations of the world should come together. A study of what has already been accomplished through this end will reveal the fact that this is a sound philosophy. Signor Luzzatti, the apostle of the new rural Italy, spoke at length to the commission on making something out of nothing or capitalizing the good-will of men. Monsieur Vigès, the grand old man of France, who resigned as Minister of Agriculture after five successive terms, in order that he might become the president of the allied voluntary agricultural societies of all France (without pay), moved the entire commission to tears as he modestly but passionately declared that his political services to his country were as nothing compared to the voluntary service as an apostle of co-operation, for as a volunteer he was able to establish an "agricultural mutuality" or brotherly trustfulness among the farmers. Sir Horace Plunkett's personality is greater than his propaganda and he draws by the great motive of his life the ablest and best men of all Ireland, Protestant and Catholic. His

spirit is contagious and among his followers are men and women working for a mere pittance or for no financial return who could command in our country from five to ten thousand dollars annually. One splendid business man, an Oxford graduate who gives large blocks of time and pays his own expenses, put it this way: "Sir Horace's life is a constant inspiration to me, and the work of promoting co-operation is great. He can have me or anything that I have."

Is it any wonder that co-operation is a success in Ireland under such leadership? Many co-operative dairies were visited by the commission and always the village priest or the pastor was a factor in the organization and always men of unquestioned character were the leaders—men who had caught the real spirit of service to others and who were doing much more than they were paid for in holding the co-operators together in times of crisis—Christianizing rural business.

Throughout Germany, where the Rural Credit System has perhaps been best worked out, the name of Raifaisen is held in loving memory by the people, for Raifaisen paid the price of efficiency in rural credit by placing service to his fellowmen above personal gain or greed. His system is of world renown, but he is remembered in Germany not primarily as a financier or the creator of an equitable plan of rural credit but as a friend of the people—a man who demonstrated the close relationship between character and credit and the economic value of a clean life. In every country visited by the commission this fundamental principle obtained. Whenever any plan or system of rural betterment really worth while was in operation its success depended upon unselfish leadership.

Europeans for the most part are ready to concede this and without doubt this influence is having its effect upon rural business in this country, for everywhere it is manifesting itself. Agricultural experts are teaching the vital relationship of corn and character. A corn show exhibiting the product of a Young Men's Christian Association group in Michigan recently was held in the county courtroom. The judge in granting the use of his court remarked that if the boys of the county were busy producing more and better corn there would be less criminals to judge.

Farmers are beginning to treat the soil as

though it were holy, and are conscious of working together with God when they produce more and better crops. Bankers are recognizing the commercial value of good character. At a recent meeting of one of the most progressive State Bankers' Association of the Middle West, fifteen hundred bankers received two addresses on vital Christianity in its relation to the modern business man with more enthusiasm than a full explana-

tion of the Federal Reserve Bank System by a United States Congressman or a discussion of rural credits. No appeal meets with a more ready response than the one which spiritualizes the commonplace and demonstrates to the farmer, the banker or any other rural business man the close relationship between good character and good business. The times are ripe for this gospel. It is an unprecedented opportunity for the rural church.

## A Cooperative Country Church Movement

F. L. ALLEN

IN 1913 Jamestown, Pa., enjoyed a series of very profitable revival meetings, conducted by Evangelist Dr. W. W. Orr. Rev. H. E. Bright, of the M. E. church of Kinsman, O., conceived the idea of bringing the privileges of such a meeting to his rural community. Under his leadership the idea finally crystallized into an organization of the Christian workers of half a dozen distinctively rural townships for the purpose of holding a country church revival.

Dr. Orr was asked to conduct the meetings, and in consenting said that it was something of an experiment; that such meetings were always held in larger centers, where more people could be reached, and the country districts were neglected; that in coming to Kinsman he was turning down invitations from larger cities, to see if it were possible to reach the people of the country through such an organized co-operative movement. The tabernacle used in Jamestown was purchased for \$350, and carefully dismantled, and 19 farmers hauled it to Kinsman, the center of the co-operative group, on their sleds. Early in the spring 88 men of the "group," mostly farmers, got together and set up the tabernacle, the ladies of the churches serving dinner. Even before this the entire campaign was organized and the following committees were actively at work. Executive, finance, publicity, personal work, transportation, ushers, etc., and everything gotten in readiness for the meetings in June. This was indeed something of an experiment—a summer revival in the country.

The meetings were well advertised and

much preparatory work done, and on Sunday, May 31st, the first day of the meetings, the tabernacle was filled, and 1,000 country people heard the Gospel message presented as few of them had heard it before, and the success of the movement was assured. Dr. Orr said of his preaching, that it was the same old message they had always heard, the only difference was, that most preachers gave it cold, while he gave it hot.

One of the strong features of the meetings was the choir of 100 voices led by Prof. H. P. Armstrong, who with his wife were employed with Dr. Orr for the occasion.

For three weeks Dr. Orr and Prof. Armstrong preached and sang the Gospel each afternoon and evening at the tabernacle, and held morning services in the surrounding townships. People from all over the "group" as the co-operating territory was called, came in automobiles and carriages and often crowded the tabernacle. Great interest was manifest; 30 or 40 men offered their machines and time, that those might get to the meetings that could not otherwise attend.

At a result of the effort, some 240 persons confessed Christ at the meetings and the churches of the "group" have received 250 into their membership. The results are to be counted not alone in the accessions to church membership, but in the better community feeling and quickened country life; the spirit of harmony and fellowship in the churches and throughout the countryside.

There are those who always want to know the cost; the money paid for the tabernacle;

to Prof. Armstrong and his wife; for advertising, transportation and incidentals, totaled \$750, and a free-will offering of \$725 was taken for Dr. Orr on the last day of the meetings. The money was raised easily and without any undue pressure. The expense was insignificant compared with the results.

I have written this with the thought that there might be in our experience at Kins-

man a suggestion for other rural communities. Of course, "It is not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord," but the Spirit's power is usually manifest through human instrumentalities, and our experience shows that it is possible to organize in rural communities, channels through which this power may flow in large measure.

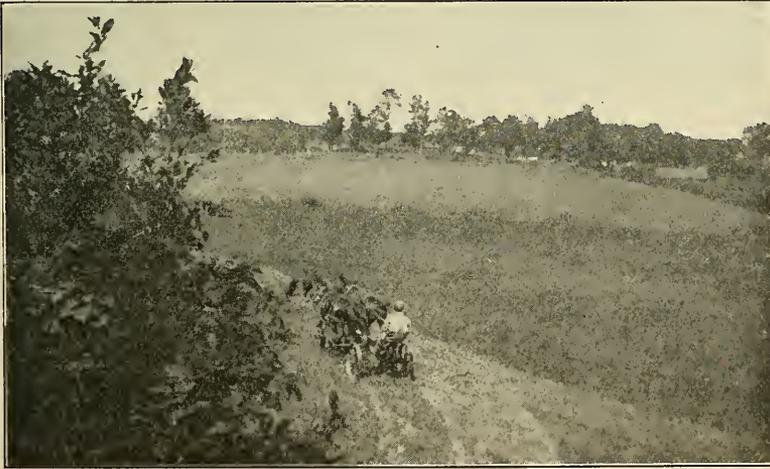
## The Protest of Deacon Moxley

SAMUEL TILDEN LARKIN

**G**IT up thar Moll, yuh triflin' critter!" Deacon Moxley gave the old mare a vicious jab with the end of the stick that served him in place of a whip. One could tell at a glance that Deacon Moxley was not in the humor to be lenient or to look with the least degree of allowance on the

The church and the entire community, under the leadership of men of narrow ideas, had degenerated until all life and activity had gone. There had been no progress in any direction for the betterment of the social, religious or business affairs of the neighborhood. The business of the community was

that of farming, and it was done according to custom and not according to the best method that science and experience could teach. In the village of Wayside there was a general store, the post-office, blacksmith shop, the church and a few straggling houses. It had often been designated as an unburied corpse. The social life consisted mainly



FARMING IN THE MODERN WAY

shortcomings of any man or animal. There was a sour look on his face and a long-standing frown on his brow. He was called Deacon Moxley because of his iron disposition toward human failings and his appearance of extreme piety, and not because of any official relationship to the church. True, he did occupy a place of authority in the church, but not the place of authority as he had done in former days.

of "howdy" and "good-bye," and the religious activities of a long, dry sermon on Sunday mornings twice a month.

But a change had been in the minds of certain people for quite a while. Any change would be for the better. It could hardly be worse than the present state of affairs. The young men of the community and those of their elders who were in sympathy, had been reading and thinking and talking, and now

were beginning to act. The Rev. Mr. Grey had appeared on the scene and they had found him to be a young man of ability along the lines they needed in reforming and rebuilding the community. Also he had an unbounded ambition and enthusiasm in great contrast to all former ministers who had served the village church. He was the man they wanted and they found him willing to turn away from the attractions of the city and the larger town pastorate and try his hand on the country problem.

Deacon Moxley entered his protest. He would have none of the new-fangled notions put into the heads of the people, and he was "agin" the whole move. He argued and blustered until he got red in the face, but all in vain. Mr. Grey was called and other steps taken looking to a new state of affairs.

Deacon Moxley drove into his lot, put up his horse and went stalking into the house. His daughter, Nell, was anxiously awaiting news of the board meeting. She had met Mr. Grey a number of times and was beginning to like him very much. Like the others of progressive tendencies, she wanted to see the community wake up and move out of the old rut, but she knew better than to advance these views to her father. She was an exceedingly attractive girl, notwithstanding the poverty of her parent in that article.

"Now we're in it up to our necks," exploded the deacon.

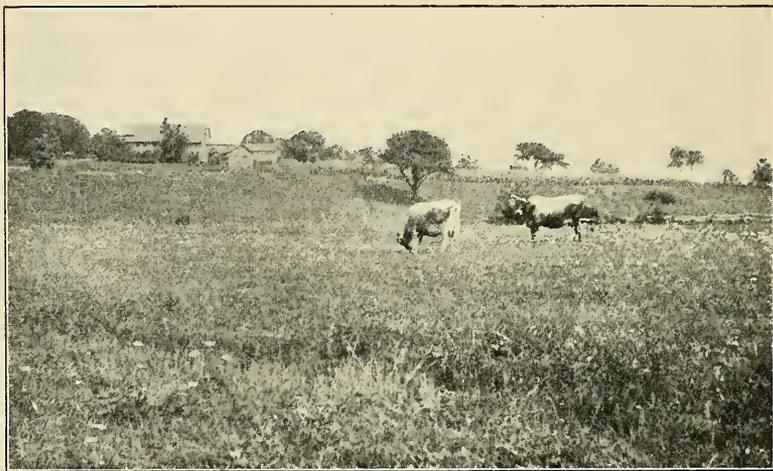
"How is that, father?"

"Why, them contrary, bull-headed critters wouldn't listen to my warnin', an' they're a goin' to ruin the church with their outlandish plans. I won't have nothin' to do with no sech doin's."

Nell hid a smile behind her hand. She

had the information she wanted, and she was glad.

Several weeks went by, and they were weeks full of effort on the part of the new minister, seconded by the approval and the assistance of the men. There had been a men's mass meeting, attended by a large majority of the men of the community, and they showed their interest by taking an active



PEACE, SWEET PEACE

part in discussion of plans and in organization for more effective neighborhood service. Some of the plans decided upon in the meeting had as their ultimate end the establishing of a community library where the people could meet and enjoy a brief time in conversation, obtain books and magazines for entertainment and profitable reading; a lecture course on agriculture that would help the men to be better farmers; a series of entertainments to bring the people together in a social way; organized effort looking to a more efficient school, better roads, improved farm conditions, etc. Then there was to be a young people's society, a song circle for the young people, a base ball club for the boys, and a debating society for the young men. There were services now every Sunday and a large increase in the attendance and interest of the people. The new work was thriving and the village putting on new life and the whole country waking up to new duties and opportunities.

Mr. Grey, on his rounds, called at the

home of Deacon Moxley, but he met with a poor reception in the person of the deacon. The cordial greeting that Nell gave him, however, more than offset the bearing of the father. Deacon Moxley was not the kind to easily admit defeat, and he was deeply incensed because the people of the entire country had risen to the leadership of this young man. He saw the change for the better—a change that amounted almost to a revolution, but, like the old man who looked for the first time on a giraffe and swore that no such animal existed, he would not admit the improved condition.

Grey had found in Nell Moxley a congenial companion, they had soon become warm friends and, almost before they knew it, this had ripened into a deeper affection. They had seen much of each other in the young people's meetings and social gatherings. While her father did not approve of the new order of things and worked overtime in talking about it to whomever would listen, yet he did not try to prevent his daughter from taking an active part. He either could not or he was ashamed to try. It was grim humor that Grey should fall in love with the daughter of his enemy, but his heart had spoken, and it was too late to withdraw. He had come into the community with an ambition to do certain things and to render an earnest service. Those things and more had been accomplished by his efforts and the co-operation of the men of the church, and he had succeeded also in winning his way to the heart and hand of the flower of the flock. And now there was before him an unpleasant thing that he had to do. He wanted Nell with all his heart, yet to have to ask Deacon Moxley for her was not an agreeable task. But there was no other way, and he mustered the required courage and made the venture.

Arriving at the Moxley farm, he found the deacon located on the porch and as cool

as ever. He did not offer his hand nor ask his visitor to be seated; but Grey took the seat without an invitation to do so, and immediately plunged into the subject for which he had come.

"And now, Mr. Moxley, I want your daughter for my wife." Grey concluded with much fervor of voice and manner.

By the time he was through, the deacon was on his feet. The explosion had come. Shaking his fist in the face of the young minister, he said:

"You've got gall to come here and ask me for my daughter! Not only tear up the whole country with your doin's, but now yuh want her, do yuh? Well, I'll give yuh to understand, sir, that I don't approve of your ways of carryin' on the work—not by a jug full do I!"

Grey was also on his feet.

"Mr. Moxley," he said, "I don't care a rap whether you approve or don't approve of my work. We have succeeded without you, and we intend to go right on building up the church and making the church serve the community. We are right, and you know we are right, and now I want you to be a man and admit it."

"I'll never do it, sir, never! But if my daughter wants yuh an' yuh want her, then take her; but I'll be blamed if I'll admit anything."

The next Sunday morning, to the surprise of everyone and of Grey in particular, Deacon Moxley came in at the door of the church, strode up the aisle and took his seat near the front. He would admit nothing by word of mouth, but by action he had admitted. Grey looked across at Nell, and she gave him a smile that revealed the situation. Then it was time to begin the service, and he had the congregation to stand and sing "Praise God from whom all blessings flow."



## Bringing in Outlying Sections

CHAS. O. BEMIES

WITHIN a radius of five miles of most country churches, whether they are located in a small town or in the open, there are usually a number of unevangelized localities. They may possibly run a Sunday-school for a few months in occasional years, and have a preacher come out once a year or so. The preachers and churches have an idea that these people on the outskirts of the parish ought to go the distance to church if they really want to hear the Gospel or care anything about church. And so they usually leave them alone without the Gospel. For various reasons these people will not go to the church.

Let us to the winds with all the alleged reasons for the whys and wherefores of this deadlocked condition! When all has been said, the solid rock responsibility rests with the church and the pastor nearest such unevangelized districts. No city missionary society is going to seek out and evangelize these scattered localities. It is the business of each near-by church do her own evangelizing. For a church and pastor to sit down and expect the people to come from far and near because they "ought to," and put the blame on them is really evangelistic criminality on the part of the church. If the people do not come to the church the Gospel must be taken to them. The Master said to the believers, "Go, preach," not to the unbelievers, "You must go where the believers are." We are to seek out and save, to go to the indifferent and lost, not wait for them to come to us. The duty of the country churches toward their border people is plain.

The initiative will not be taken by the border people, neither will it be taken by the church people. The first move must be taken by the rural pastor. He must see the dire need, study the situation, and with holy determination seek to supply that Gospel need. Right at this point the trouble usually arises, for the pastor will naturally think that he has no time, that he probably has two or more churches already to attend to, that he has to travel many miles each Sunday for his preaching appointments, and he can-

not see how he can take on any more work, as he thinks he has enough already. But many a minister is unconsciously mistaken in the amount of Gospel work he can do. I find by practical experience and by the experience of others that a pastor is just about as tired as he thinks he is. If he expects to be tired he will be, but if he is inspired every day by a large vision and its fulfillment he will be daily refreshed according to the Scripture promises. Expectancy plays a tremendous part in this matter of being tired. The average minister, if he thinks so, can take on more work with profit and inspiration to himself and to others, and get rid of that tired feeling. If the work for the border folks cannot be done on a Sunday there are five more days in the week, if he rests on Monday. Let him see his border people, arrange for a service on some week-day evening in the school house or at some other convenient point, a grange hall, at some house, or in the open air during the summer. One thing is sure, the people will come to hear him when he comes to them.

But let not the preacher suppose that preaching will accomplish the result, for the people must be built up in Christian work if the fruits are to abide. Therefore he will organize a branch or a union Sunday-school, suggest ways and means of successfully carrying it on during the whole year, and unobtrusively supervise it and encourage and train the workers at the night meetings and during his day visits, without necessarily being present at the Sunday-school itself. He will also organize a Young People's Society and be the active sponsor for it, training the young people how to do things and what to do, and how to make out programs for the meetings, being the unofficial director and manager of the young people's growing activities, teaching them to be self-reliant. The young people will readily respond and the work can be successfully built up, although the pastor may not be able to attend the meetings. The pastor can be an active supervisor of the work which will evangelize and develop the Chris-

tian activities of these border people, and attach them to both himself and to the church.

At these week-night meetings, held, say every alternate week at least, the pastor could profitably have a live song service, a bright fifteen minute conference on the local Sunday-school work, the same for the Young People's Society, and then preach with spirit for about twenty-five minutes, beginning and ending on time, with everything bright and concise.

He is thus a director of the developing

training of his border people. Two or three circling localities can be developed, and co-operative work done, by means of occasional union services at the different points, socials, entertainments, picnics, interchange of workers, and in many other ways. Thus by developing the border people into working sub-units the country pastor will discover himself and his opportunities, freshen up his own life and mission, and greatly multiply himself by training leaders, and bringing in the outlying sections into an evangelized unity with himself and the church.

## Evangelizing Whole Communities

MATTHEW B. MCNUTT

ONE of the religious weeklies reported recently that there are 77,000,000 of the 99,000,000 people of the United States that are not connected with any church. This means that only one in four of our citizens are identified with the church.

The conditions of the spiritual life of a people cannot be definitely and accurately expressed in figures, 'tis true. Many folks outside the church may be Christians. On the other hand some church members may not be Christians. But leaving a large margin in either case for the doubtful church members and for the Christians who have never made a public profession of their faith by uniting with the church, it is evident from these figures that there are many millions of people in this country that are still not reached with the Gospel. Not alone do these figures bear testimony of this condition, but the prevalence of much crime, poverty and social unrest in our midst is unmistakable proof that the Gospel and the spirit of Christ have yet to come to multitudes of our people. "By their fruits ye shall know them."

Now a whole community is evangelized when everybody in the community is constantly kept under the influences of the Gospel,—its teachings and its inspiration. A community is not evangelized when a minister goes to it and preaches once in a while. A community may even have a resident min-

ister, or ministers, with preaching every Sunday twice or more times, and still not be evangelized. I find many such communities on my travels, far too many. A great many people attend church only occasionally or not at all. The chances are they do not read or study the Bible in their homes. Nor do the plans of the church work include them. They are not reached at all by the present methods. Ministers in the larger towns say that there are very few farmers in their churches. Their statements are verified by surveys that have been made, which reveal an unchurched zone around every large town. There are scores of people in every community that can truthfully say, "no man careth for my soul." It is no wonder, therefore, that these vast millions are still out of the church and many of them out of Christ. They are not evangelized.

The difficulty lies largely in the lack of definite, systematic, evangelistic effort.

The first step towards evangelizing whole communities is to get the boundary line of each community definitely fixed. Let a survey be made in every community for the purpose of locating every family and every man, woman and child. The survey should be more than a mere counting of heads. It should include an investigation of home and community influences and conditions. If there is more than one denomination in the community the survey should be made jointly by the several denominations present, or by

as many as will participate, and the facts obtained through the investigation held in common and accessible to all. Let all the Christian people thus affiliating unite on a common plan for evangelizing the whole community, the plan to be based on an intelligent knowledge of the needs and conditions obtaining. The plan should be continued through the years, changed, and improved, of course, from time to time to meet new needs and conditions.

The nearest approach to evangelizing whole communities is when union revival meetings have been held for a short season. When earnest workers are sent out to visit all the homes and other means are employed to reach the whole people. These special seasons of refreshing never fail to bring in a harvest and to revive and strengthen those who engage in them. But this method must by no means be made a substitute for regular, organized, week-by-week effort for the spread of the Gospel.

This better work may begin with a very small group of workers, or even by a single person in the community, obsessed with the real evangelistic spirit, pastor or layman.

The boundary of the community definitely fixed and all the people located and numbered, let it be covered by prayer. In the meantime see that there is a Bible or some portion of the Word in every home. By means of the Sunday-school endeavor from time to time to enlist everybody in the study of the Scriptures. This can be done through the Cradle Roll, the Home Department, and in other ways. A visiting committee composed of church officers and teachers and others

should see that every person in the community not interested is visited at least every week so as to hold up before them the Word of Life. Hold neighborhood prayer-meetings in the various homes. Seek to install in each home a plan for daily Bible reading and prayer. Those already enlisted may do very effective calling by going two by two. Let appropriate recognition be made of every new member added to the church and Sunday-school and the event made an occasion of great rejoicing. An occasional roll call is wholesome, giving special prominence to all the members received within a given time. Use plenty of printers' ink in publishing glad tidings, extending invitations, recording progress, etc. Occasional rallies are stimulating. Gospel meetings conducted by the workers should be held from time to time in school houses, groves, at cross roads, and everywhere else that a company of people can be assembled. Various forms of social service to the community may be used as effective means in getting in touch with folks and in winning them, such as a lyceum course, athletics, social gatherings, farmers institutes, community improvement clubs, etc. The idea is to bring the leaven of the Word in touch with that which needs to be leavened and to keep it in touch. The Spirit is the generating power, but the disciples must sow the seed in every heart and water and nurture till the harvest comes. God gives the increase.

Earnest, faithful, definite, systematic, continuous evangelistic effort for each and all of the people in a community cannot fail to bring large returns.



"DOUBLE SUPPER" A GAME UNDER HEAVEN'S CANOPY





