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*The Ministry in Rural
Communities.*

PRESIDENT'S REPORT.

COMMENCEMENT WEEK.

CLASS SONG.

IN MEMORIAM—GEORGE LOVELL CARY

ADIN BALLOU LECTURE.

REV. JOSEPH N. PARDEE

INSTITUTE FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION.

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THE MINISTRY IN RURAL COMMUNITIES.

BY J. N. PARDEE.

Dr. Thomas Nixon Carver, Professor of Economics in Harvard University, and President of the New England Country Church Association, approaching the subject from the view-point of an economist, assumes that if the country districts are to become Christian, it will be because Christians are the best farmers. "Therefore it behooves the rural churches to see to it that their members are made better farmers by the fact of membership." Agreeing with him perfectly, I assume that the important work of the country minister lies in making the population Christian; and, if the country is to become pagan, because pagans are the best farmers, it will be because of a lack of Christian ministers of the right kind. But, one of the most hopeful features of the interest in rural progress is the newly awakened concern in nearly all of our theological schools; their readiness to co-operate with the agricultural colleges, and with all other helpful forces, and their appeal to the heroism of their young men to turn their attention countryward and train themselves for service in neglected fields. (As large opportunities for self-sacrifice exist in America, as in India or China.) This matter should appeal also to the practical mind, for, as half of our population lives in the country, half of the students must drift to the country or go without professional employment.

By way of prelude, it may be said that the things that count for most in the ministry, in country and in city, are certain indefinable qualities of personality,—insight, faith, conviction and consecration. Training and equipment are of value as tools; they are a kind of art, not for Art's sake, but for Life's sake.

The minister is accepted by the people today, not so much for his gown and bands, or the way he buttons his collar; not so much for his scholarship, his eloquence, or his felicity in prayer, though these things count, as for his manhood, his manners among men, his ability to do things, and, above all, for his unselfishness and his consecration to divine and human ideals. If there is a growing paganism in the country, which I doubt, the country pagan wants the minister to be a Christian, in the broadest and most practical sense of the term.

Now we are receiving a good deal of advice about the train-

ing of ministers for the rural ministry, with Jean Frederick Oberlin held up as an ideal. But the relation of the minister to an agricultural population has undergone many changes since earlier times. European agriculture grew out of the monasteries, and the monks were the teachers and pioneers. Oberlin found conditions in the Ban de la Roche desperate, and he revolutionized them. The Puritan parsons of New England were leaders in the tillage of the soil; but, in our day of specialization, other leaders and other forces have taken the leadership. We need Oberlin's sagacity, pluck, patience, persistence, endurance, tact and sympathy, and his liberality, but there is less call for us to do the kind of work Oberlin did.

The agricultural colleges and experiment stations, the Departments of Agriculture, state and national, are in close touch with the farms. Farmers' Institutes are multiplying; Granges are active; a very able agricultural press sends its publications into almost every rural household; the "Good Roads" movement is everywhere a live issue; the study of agriculture in the public schools is spreading; co-operation is growing; farmers pay taxes for public schools willingly, and are calling for the best teachers. If there is any place where Oberlins are needed, it is in the South, where Rev. W. S. Key is doing such a work; but of the South I know too little to speak with authority.

I do not believe that the institutional church is practicable, if it is desirable, in most country districts, at least under present conditions. It is better to draw a pretty clear line between the interests of the church and the interests of the town, and to take up each kind of work independently of every other kind. Let each interest have its own special organization. But we do need somebody to lead in such work as the Y. M. C. A. is doing in athletics, lectures, classes, and in directing the energies of the young into wholesome channels. The man who is fitted for this work will find enough to do.

In many of our rural communities the minister is often the only educated man of leisure, the only man competent to lead; and in such cases the more he really knows about all sorts of things, the better it is for the community, if he has tact enough to use what he knows in practical and judicious ways.

The actual conditions call for educated men. The city church can get along with eloquence, manners, style. The dilettante minister may find a place in some city pulpit, but the country demands men who know something. The country minister ought to be reasonably well read in the sciences, and know how to think, and know how to meet men; and all this I say without slighting his theological training and his Biblical criticism. He

ought to know something more than superficially about the industry on which the life of his people is based. Not that he is to be a teacher of agriculture, or rural economics; but because that knowledge is the open highway to a profound sympathy with the ideals, the struggles, trials, hopes and ambitions of the people to whom he ministers, and to an insight into their mental processes and their moral tone. This is the foundation theory of the Summer School for Country Clergymen that is held at the Agricultural College of Massachusetts, at Amherst. And for this reason a course at an Agricultural College is an extremely valuable supplement to a theological course.

But the young man who looks countryward for his field should never forget that the primary work of the Christian minister, in the country as well as in the city, is to call the attention of men, women and children to the Eternal Realities; to translate the terms of a sane, vital philosophy of the Universe into the terms of the common thought and life; to find in high thoughts of the moral government of God motives for the conduct of human beings in their relations to one another; to stimulate high ambitions, clarify thought, widen knowledge, give hope in discouragement, and soothe the sorrows of the afflicted. To enable him to do this in the most effective way, all is fish that comes to his net; but how far he shall go to fish in other than religious waters depends upon the circumstances of his environment, and the character of his tackle.

I would not put too much emphasis upon an all-round equipment, however. Some of our most successful, most inspiring, most helpful country ministers, who have moulded the character of rising generations have been saintly men who knew nothing about common affairs, and could handle no tool heavier than a pen; but they were men who knew much about the deep things of God, and the aspirations of the human soul; men of high scholarship, profound thought and of spiritual vision; men who loved the people and whom the people loved.

The first coign of vantage the minister is to occupy is the pulpit. It is here that the candidate is "sized up." It is here that his intellectual and spiritual measure is taken. He is "called" almost exclusively upon his character and quality as a preacher; and the keenest, shrewdest critics he will ever face he stands before in the country pulpits. It is from the pulpit that he wields his greatest influence. Country congregations, as a rule, will forgive neglect and short-comings in all other departments of his work sooner than failures in the pulpit. They will go into their pockets far deeper for a good preacher than for a good social worker, teacher of civics, organizer of clubs, or even for a

good pastor, though all these things are highly appreciated. What we call "worship" or devotional service, is, often, in the rural mind, a secondary consideration; possibly because it has been neglected. (For this reason the Episcopal Church has not flourished in the country.)

I want to make this point clear because there has been, and still is, an impression abroad that almost any kind of preaching will "go" in the country. Poor preaching does go; many cheap things go for the simple reason that the people of a poor church feel their inability to pay for anything better; but the man who lets himself down from his very best, through a vain impression that his audience does not know a good thing when it sees it, or hears it, be he preacher, lecturer, singer or entertainer, makes the mistake of his life. In the city you may find more brilliant audiences, more cultivated audiences, because in the city you are likely to have picked audiences; but in the democracy of the country the stranger who looks into unemotional faces, reserved and self-contained, often fails to appreciate the shrewd intelligence, the general knowledge of men and affairs, the keen ability to detect sophistry in reasoning, that actually characterize a normal country congregation. And, the further back you go into pioneer regions, the more really educated men and women are you likely to meet, though they may not be regular church goers.

I know how summer visitors bring back to the city many stories of rural stupidity; but summer visitors, like the novelists, are apt to generalize from incidental cases, and to look through glasses colored by their own abnormal aestheticism. I have myself probably preached and lectured in as great a variety of places—churches, school houses, halls, from the wild woods of Maine to the prairies of Iowa,—as any man of my age; and I have yet to find a rural audience that would not average up in general intelligence, and breadth of information to the "swell" clubs I sometimes have the privilege of banqueting with in the large cities.

The rural mind is essentially a serious mind, and is given to thoughtful reflection. It is a philosophical mind. The natural environment, the call to deal with natural phenomena in forest and field stimulates the imagination to trace out lines of cause and effect. You never hear of a country gathering being stampeded by fright, or of its rushing out of doors in a panic. Let the cry of fire run through a crowded church, and the men will quietly go out to see what the matter is, while the women begin to gather up the hymn books and the cushions. The whole training, from that of the baby wandering in the fields, the ten-year-old

going off alone with a team, to the management of a farm, teaches self-reliance. Country people are no more easily stam-peded by flaming eloquence or burning periods of rhetorical pas-sion.

Rural industry allows time for thought, even to the making of individual theologies; and the rural theologian is quite apt to put the theologian of the schools upon his mettle. May the good Lord deliver you from such unequal contests of wit!

In the country one finds the keenest sense of humor, though it is not always refined. Rural humor is born of the habit of tracing the lines of cause and effect; and is therefore quick to see the ludicrous side of abnormal relations. Possibly for this reason rural congregations are seldom moved by what is known as "sensational preaching." Religious revivals are hard to start in the country; and, when they are started, they usually do more harm than good. I have seen a great many of them in the old revivalistic, camp meeting days, and have noticed that the writhing and the shouting of the wrestlers has had the effect of exciting amusement, if not scoffing, on the part of the greater body of lookers on. This is not because country people have not a pro-found respect for religion, but because the rural mind is essen-tially rationalistic. It is its habit to reason things out, crude though much of its reasoning may be. Country juries seldom render illogical verdicts.

In many ways the average country audience is deceiving. Reserved and modest, with a kindly tolerance for crudities and respect for good intentions, it will stifle its humor, and pass ridiculous situations by without a smile simply on account of a feeling of decency; and the deeper the impression you make, the less applause will you be likely to get.

One distinction should here be made; and that is between intelligence and culture. You will find in the country little appre-ciation of Art for Art's sake. What is it good for is the question. Country people are born pragmatists. Artists came to our town and preached aesthetics without effect. But when we proved that beauty increased the value of property, the people took hold and cleaned up the dooryards, laid cement walks, and painted their houses. That shrewd observer, Dr. Carver, once said to me that, if he were training men for city pulpits, he would put his emphasis first upon pleasing manners, secondly upon rhetoric and voice culture, and thirdly upon thought; but, if he were trniaing them for the country, he would reverse the emphasis.

The lesson of all this for the preacher is to be as thorough with his thought as he can; as direct and simple with his state-ments, driving straight forward to the heart of things along the

road of logical common sense. Fancy rhetoric is a cumbrance; sounding periods put hard-working men to sleep; but the preaching that takes hold on life furnishes food for thought and lights up dark subjects will find as serious response in any congregation that gathers from the farms and forests as it will anywhere. Still it must be said that real literary finish is not lost on rural audiences; and no audiences are less tolerant of anything that savors of boorishness, either in the pulpit or out of it. And here I might say, that country congregations retain a great respect for the Bible, and are appreciative of Biblical preaching; and especially so because they are just beginning to see the force of the higher criticism. The higher criticism is an effective antidote to crude rationalism. And when you go to the country to preach, please do not forget to read the hymns. There is more worship in a hymn well read than in its rendering, or rending by an average country choir. Many people have an idea that country congregations call for extemporaneous preaching. Once that was true except in scholarly New England. Now a man is expected to do his best whichever way he choose. I have known one man who wrote satisfactory sermons to lose his pulpit because he insisted on preaching extemporaneously, and he could not do it.

I have dwelt upon preaching because it is a primary matter; but I would not have the inference drawn that it is the only thing to be considered, in treating the place which the minister holds in a rural community. The point is that, if a man can not preach acceptably, he had better not seek a country pulpit. If he can, then his position gives him standing, and his opportunities for usefulness broaden out, and he finds his place among the affairs of the community according to his ability and equipment.

About what the minister can do for civic betterment, I cannot speak very definitely as this is such a personal matter; it depends so much upon circumstances that no rule can be laid down; and there is so much that must be said about his own special place and office that time forbids. His work in Sunday School, and with guilds and auxiliary societies is not essentially different from the same work in city churches. There is little for him to do in the administration of charities. The country knows little of real poverty; and the poor that we have with us are taken care of by town officers, while the personal touch is given by a kindly neighborliness. My own rule, formulated from experience is: Keep an eye on everything; be ready for emergencies; but never do anything that anybody else can do as well as I can.

Most writers dwell upon the close relation of the country

minister to his people in the pastoral relation. It is assumed that the country pastor comes into the most intimate personal relations with the members of his flock; that he knows their thoughts, feelings, pains and trials. I am inclined to be very doubtful of this; and other country pastors, with whom I have talked about the matter, confirm my doubts. Of all people, country people are the hardest to become really acquainted with. Rural life fosters a strong individualism. The countryman asserts his own opinions freely, and is ready to argue with the minister; but when he comes to speaking of the things that touch him most deeply, especially in the region of the emotions, he is shy and reserved. He feels his inability to express himself in words. Self-reliant, the countryman keeps his pains and troubles to himself; or, if he talks of them, he is much freer with his neighbors than with his minister. Further still, his self-dependent life breeds in him an element of stoicism. There are ministers who have the faculty, happy or otherwise, of probing their people, or of worming out confidences; but the country pastor with human delicacy probably knows as little of the troubles of his people as any man in the community, and hears as little of the gossip that is going about. I have my doubts about country folks having many serious troubles, save when sickness invades, or death blights the household. Business perplexities are rare. Poverty is little known. Vice hides itself in the by-ways. On the whole, life is normal and wholesome; people are too busy to give much attention to the ills of the flesh, and they sleep too soundly to be troubled much by the ills of the spirit. Family differences, feuds between neighbors, personal jealousies, such as we read about in novels and see little of, the wise man soon concludes to leave alone; and when he strikes them on general principles in his pulpit, where the blow is apt to tell most strongly, he can strike most effectively if his congregation realizes that he has had no personal contact with them. The preacher who knows too much about the inner lives of individuals is seriously handicapped.

The country minister faces peculiar difficulties and dangers. Jesus had in mind conditions essentially rural when he advised his disciples to be "As wise as serpents and as harmless as doves." Peculiar difficulties lie in the strong individualism that country industry, isolation and self-reliance foster. Woe to the minister that attempts to assert authority. Even Catholic priests have realized this resistant quality of the rural mind. In the management of churches this individualism, this absence of respect for authority, this lack of co-operative spirit, is the most difficult condition the pastor meets.

In the city church the minister deals, in the main, with trained

business men. Business men are placed upon the standing committees. The trained business man has a habit of putting responsibility upon subordinates, and of respecting the authority of superiors. He looks upon the minister much as he looks upon the head of some department. As a director of a corporation, he puts large powers into the hands of the President, gives him a reasonably free hand, and looks to him for results. He does the same with his minister. The minister is the head of the corporation. From him he expects results. How he is to obtain these results is the minister's business.

In the working of a church corporation in the country, composed mainly of farmers and their wives, who are not trained business men, though shrewd in their own small business methods, the business is held in the hands of the corporation as a whole. Every member wants to have his way about it; and the dominating members are bound to have things their own way. Personalities are apt to clash. Traditions run deep. If a church is well organized, it is likely to run in grooves along established lines; if not, it is likely to fall into the hands of a few who are jealous of interference. The curse of many country churches is the slipshod, unbusiness-like methods of their maintenance. More country ministers fail, and lose their pulpits on these accounts than on all other accounts. They are apt to make one of two mistakes. The first is the mistake of holding aloof from the business affairs of the church; the other is of interfering with them unwisely. One great need of the country churches, if not the greatest, is men of organizing and directing ability. I see no way of overcoming the inertia, the bad management, the business failures that beset many of our country churches, but the training of ministers in business methods, and then insisting that the minister is the responsible head of the corporation.

Here I ought to say a word about the minister's official position. Under the congregational theory, whatever authority the minister has is derived from the congregation; or from the corporation. But in the absence of any specific rule made by the corporation, the corporation centers in him. He can do the same things that the corporation can do. By usage and custom he is given control of the pulpit, and other business is put into the hands of other officers. But it is a prerogative of his office to exercise advisory oversight upon the other officers, and to call them to account if they neglect the duties of their offices. In New England most religious societies are corporations. Where they are not incorporated, the title to property and the business management are vested in boards of trustees. These boards are responsible, not to the congregation, but to the state. All the

power the congregation has over them is the power of election. The minister, however, is not beholden to the trustees, except in the matter of salary. He represents the congregation, and as its official head properly exercises advisory functions with the trustees. Lawyers tell me that this is good law, as well as good business. I cannot go into this matter at any length, but ministers should make a study of it and know where they stand. In most cases the welfare of the church depends upon the tactful way in which the minister assumes and exercises his business function. The minister who allows himself to be looked upon merely as the hired man in the pulpit occupies an unstable position.

All churches are governed by the laws of the states. They make their own by-laws, but the statutes are their constitutions. It is surprising to find the great number of ministers and standing committees who have no knowledge of the laws under which their churches exist. I know a number of old churches, prosperous churches,—that have been letting things run at loose ends so long that nobody knows where they stand legally, or what the title to their property is. Judge Davis, of the Land Court of Massachusetts says, "The courts of this Commonwealth dread nothing so much as a Church Case." And yet the statutes are plain and explicit, and the decisions of the Supreme Court, from the earliest times till now, have been uniform. It seems to me that in the training of ministers for the country, a course in ecclesiastical law would be as valuable as a course at an agricultural college.

Given a knowledge of the law; given a working idea of business methods, one word can cover all the other steps necessary to put a church upon a good working basis. That word is "tact." Aside from the difficulties that arise from imperfect organization, great troubles sometimes come from the force of personalities. Churches would hardly be human organisms if they did not contain individuals who are dissatisfied with the authorities, dissatisfied with the minister, or have grievances against other members of the church. In a city church the minister usually draws his own clientele and builds up his own machine. In the country few men do it. In the city the popular preacher is superior to the institution; in the country the institution is superior. Of all institutions the country church has the most tenacious hold. In the city disgruntled worshippers can go off to some other church; in the country they hang on to the institution and stay to make trouble. What is the minister to do in such cases?

No perfectly satisfactory rule can be laid down that even the

most angelic minister could make work to perfect satisfaction; but, judging from a somewhat wide observation and experience, my own opinion is that more ministers make a mistake in resigning than in sticking to their posts and letting the other fellows become resigned. The fact is that the man who is worth having usually has a big majority on his side; and the man who counts up his majority and sticks, who appears to be utterly oblivious to personal dissatisfactions, and never answers back, who puts his emphasis upon the work he is doing for God and humanity, who looks to the good of the church rather than to his own peace of mind, lives through troublous crises and wins out. Of course, some short pastorates are evidences, as Beecher said at Yale, of "Divine mercy to the parishes." More are evidences of hypersensitiveness, squeamishness or bad judgment, if not of ambition on the part of thin-skinned ministers. Here it is proper to put in a word of general warning. The literature of the subject generally lays the blame for short pastorates, and the numerous ills from which they spring, to the psychology, the economics, the "human cussedness" of the people who make up the body of our congregations.

But this is a one-sided view of pastoral responsibilities. A good many elements enter into it. Sometimes the minister is wholly at fault. But it may be said in general that it is the business of the man who puts on the armor of Christ to win victories. It is the business of the pastor of a church to win the people. It is his business to persuade them, lead them. However intelligent they may be, he is dealing with limited minds, childish personalities, ignorance, diabolism if you please. He is a foolish man if he listens to all their little criticisms. Sometimes it may be necessary to kindly, sweetly, gently, shake them over the bleaching fumes of the fumigating pit; but it is not his business to let them go to the Devil. If the task is too great for him, it simply proves that he is not equal to the task. He may succeed better in some other place. The point I would like to emphasize is, that in a country town, the influence which a minister exerts, both in and out of the church, the good he does and the reward he receives, are almost directly in proportion to his staying qualities. To look upon a country church as a good place to develop homiletic wings, for flights to some metropolis, strikes me as a kind of criminal cruelty; or ignorant folly.

Furthermore, the position a minister holds in a rural community (as well as in the city if not more so) the influence he exerts, depends less upon his intellectual ability, less upon his equipment, less upon his popular gifts, his scholarship and training, though all of these have their high values, than upon a quiet,

unconscious acceptance by the people. It is a bit difficult to make this important point clear, and I shall have to illustrate it. For example: A minister goes to a town to settle. Everybody goes to church once at least to hear him. He is the latest curiosity. He is pointed out as he passes by. Everybody talks about him. He is invited out to tea. If he is worth being proud of, the church people are proud of him. A sense of proprietorship is evident. He is "our" minister. Perhaps he is criticised. Perhaps he runs across the grain of somebody and some folks get down on him. Then his champions rise up and fight battles for him. So time runs on until nobody takes any special notice of him. Congregations settle down to a staid average. Nobody invites him to tea, unless he chances to come around at tea time, and then they take him in informally. Things run along like clock work. Then he begins to feel that his work is done in that place and he had better be moving on.

It may take six, eight or ten years to arrive at this demoralizing stage; but, if the minister only knew it, he has arrived at a stage where he holds a secure place, and where his real power is probably greater than at any previous point in his career. He has been accepted by the people. He is one of them; one of the citizens. His machine is in running order. Disgruntled members have disappeared. Children have grown up from the Sunday School, and, if he has done his duty, are voting members of the church and always ready to stand by him. The danger at this point is that he will not wake up to a realizing sense of the situation, and look forward to still greater activity.

Dr. Charles Carroll Everett, of blessed memory, used to quote somebody as saying: "A minister should not use his influence until he has got it. When he has got it, he should not fail to use it." To which he himself added, "The way to get it is to use it." In applying this to the ministry in a country town, to the minister as a man among men and a citizen, some qualifications are needful.

Our country towns need, above all things else, strong leadership. The country has no lack of potential efficiency. Good workers are there, if well directed; and, once agreed upon a plan, they work with little friction. Personal rivalries are rare, and desire to lead is seldom evident. But leadership calls for delicacy and finesse. Here is where the path of danger lies to the young minister who has taken courses in sociology, studied civic service, dipped into social settlement work and has a passion for organization; and especially if he has studied rural sociology in books, and formulated pet theories of the rural uplift. The only leadership that will attract a following in the country is the kind

that can show the way in concrete fashion. The rural mind is highly concrete, as well as self-reliant. The only teaching that will have much effect is teaching by the object method. If I wanted to teach the farmers how to raise better potatoes, and more of them, I would say nothing about it. I would plant a field by the road side, and do the talking after the crop was dug. Not having a field, I would find some expert who has made good and let him do the talking.

If danger lies in unwise attempts at leadership, success often lies in a method of leadership that stands behind, if such a Hibernicism is allowable, and sets other people up to issue the orders. Remember the rule: Keep an eye on everything; but never do anything yourself that anybody else can do as well.

If I do not know how to do something that needs to be done, there is somebody somewhere who does know; and the best thing I can do is to find that person and let him have the honor of doing it. Often you need not go far to find him. But if you must do a thing in order to have it done, be mighty sure you can carry it through to a successful termination. Failures in the country are conspicuous; and everybody knows why you failed, and country folks have long memories. Just now I want the road through the village oiled. If I brought the matter up in town meeting, it might end in talk. I do not know just how to do it; but the engineer of the Highway Commission knows how, and the Chairman of the Commission has offered me the use of one of his men to show me how to do it. If it is a success in front of the parsonage, it will go through the village speedily.

A great deal of trouble has been caused in country towns by the desire of some new ministers to have their fingers in every pie, and to pull out the plums for the glorification of their own church. This officiousness is less harmful in the city, because there competition is intense and people are accustomed to have about everything done for them. You cannot do things for country people; you can only show them how to do things for themselves. The social settlement idea can not be made to work in the country, if it is the least bit obvious. Even though your motives are the most disinterested, you are apt to run up against the feeling that you want to "run things." It causes a great deal of friction, and with most people it leads to doing nothing for the public benefit. A great deal of the deadness of rural communities is owing to a senseless suspicion of the man who seems to want to be boss.

How are you to meet this feeling? It may be well to stop awhile and let things go undone, until the people see what happens when you hold back. But if you must do things in order

to have them done, why, do them, but do them with certainty. Count your majority. The majority will ultimately be with you, if you have common sense and a habit of making good. A reputation for knowing what you are about, and for succeeding in your undertakings, is itself a magnet to draw support. And when you have gained that reputation, your field of usefulness, as a minister, as a citizen, as a man among men, is limited only by your own energy, state of health, ability and equipment. Every rural field is fertile with possibilities. Resources are not exhausted, they remain unworked. The greatest need I have in my own little field is the need of a secretary and assistant. I have to do too many things with my own hands, to spend too much time on trivial matters, to go too far to do research work.

I spoke yesterday about the turn of the tide countryward. A very hopeful thing for the coming minister is the attention that is being given by all denominations to the matter of ministerial support. The cost of living and of ministerial efficiency is relatively higher in the country than in the city. Provisions of all kinds cost quite as much. Fuel is quite expensive. A horse and carriage, or an automobile, is essential. The minister who does not travel and keep in touch with the outside world is in danger of drying up. There are ways, however, of getting books. The farming class does not realize the situation because it costs the farmer comparatively little to live, and he says that the minister handles as much money as he does, which is generally true. But other bodies are taking hold of the matter.

It is a question how far a minister ought to go in the attempt to eke out a living by engaging in gainful occupations such as cultivating land, etc. As a rule I believe it to be a mistake for him to go far on such a line. The success of even a small church calls for all his best powers, steadily employed. The harder the field, the greater the labor; the thinner the soil, the more fertilizer is needed. But I have this conviction, based upon experience and wide acquaintance, that the young man who goes to a country place, with an adequate equipment of brains, energy, common sense and consecration, and puts his life into his work with no thought of how he is to live, who is not anxious about the morrow, but seeks first the kingdom of God, will have the things he needs added to him; and in the end his balance sheet will be quite as clean as that of the man who begins in a city pulpit with a big salary. It depends, not on the environment at all, but on his own personality. I know men who have served a church and a town, and actually become rich in small country parishes. Despite the pathetic stories current, the fact remains that country ministers do live reasonably well; do keep up with the times;

do educate their children; do preserve their mental, moral and spiritual poise. Country children have opportunities for securing the means of education that many a city child lacks. The country boy or girl is far less dependent upon paternal aid than the city youth.

How country ministers do come out ahead would make some interesting stories, if they could be induced to print them. A good deal of the success is owing to cheerful dispositions. Woe to the minister who goes about with a lugubrious face, complaining of his treatment. Mark Tapley would succeed better in the sacred office. A saving sense of humor has high values in ministerial relationships. When you come to think of it, is it not ridiculous for a preacher of the gospel of joy to worry about the price of beef and broadcloth? If my parishioners have to eat boiled potatoes and home-made chickens on account of a mythical beef trust, I can eat boiled potatoes and home-made chickens. I can wear shabby clothes in well-dressed company if my parishioners can stand it; and they know it. As a fact shabby ministers make them ashamed. I can stay away from conventions if they see no reason for my going, and they know it. Consequently I go. It would utterly discourage them if I demanded a rise in salary large enough to buy clothes and pay for railroad tickets; but country people are born humorists, and genuine humor has its serious side. Charity is it? No. It is not charity in any offensive sense. All that comes my way out of people's good will is the old fashioned "Support and Maintenance." I like that old Puritan term.

Country life has perils for the minister. The peril of indolence is ever present. Demands upon his energies may be light. Perils of introspection may follow. Small demands leave time for brooding, and brooding over small ills is likely to hatch out whole broods of large ills. But to the man of resources and self-reliance the country pastorate has its compensations. Nature in her various moods is ever whispering trust and confidence. The genuine life and character of the people he associates with encourage a philosophic optimism. Country ministers seldom become pessimists. Country life gives time for reading, study, reflection. The best read men, the most thoughtful men, the best informed men, in science and philosophy, in Biblical criticism and in up-to-date theology that we meet outside of the schools in our ministerial associations are men who come from the rural parishes; and many men who go about tell me that they hear the best preaching, as the average goes, from the country pulpits.

And the country minister who is doing anything worth while is not so obscure an individual as he sometimes thinks himself.

His parish is all the time growing wider. His denomination knows what he is doing. Summer visitors of kindly sympathies and generous dispositions discover him. Personal touch with the rising generation covers the earth with a host of friends; and when he travels he need pay few hotel bills. His scattered children have a welcome for him. If memory hath heavenly treasures in it, who has laid up greater?

A generation hence, Boston children will go to the Public Library to find out who Edward Everett Hale and Minot J. Savage were; but no child of Lancaster or of Ashby will be asking who George M. Bartol and George S. Shaw were. Their memories are stamped upon all the institutions of their towns. Nobody in Bolton, or round about, ever asks who Isaac Allen was, though he died sixty-six years ago. None of these country pastors ever did anything very brilliant or famous, except to stay, sixty years, forty years, forty-four years; but if you will compare the present character of their towns with some that have had no such service as these men rendered you will see what their patient work amounted to.

INSTITUTE FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The following is the prospectus of the Institute for Religious Education, Meadville, Pennsylvania, June 27 to July 11, 1910:

PresidentRev. F. C. Southworth
Dean.....Rev. Wm. I. Lawrance
SecretaryRev. Henry T. Secrist
TreasurerRev. W. C. Green

Committee from Meadville Conference: Rev. L. W. Mason, D.D., Rev. Minot O. Simons, Prof. F. C. Doan, Ph.D.

The Institute has been arranged in accordance with a vote of the Meadville Conference. The Meadville Theological School and the Unitarian Sunday School Society co-operate with the churches in maintaining it.

It will be held for two weeks at Meadville, Pa., beginning on Monday, June 27, 1910, and closing on Monday, July 11. Most of the sessions will be held at the Theological School.

THE PROGRAM

Service will be held in the Chapel every morning.

Frank C. Doan, Ph.D., professor of Systematic Theology and the Philosophy of Religion in the Meadville Theological School, will give a course of lectures on "The Religion of Childhood." In connection with these will be three conferences in which the lectures of Professor Doan will be discussed in relation to the boys and girls as we know them. These conferences will be led by Rev. H. T. Secrist.

Francis A. Christie, D.D., professor of Church History and the Theology of the New Testament in the Theological School, will give a course of lectures on "The Jesus of History."

Rev. Wm. I. Lawrance, president of the Unitarian Sunday School Society, will give Readings from the Prophets.

A series of lectures on the kindergarten and on work for the youngest children will be given by Miss Sara C. Bullard, of Boston, Mass. Miss Bullard is one of the ablest teachers in the kindergartens of the public schools and of Unitarian Sunday Schools. She will give material for direct use and will deal with her subject in a very practical way. On two days there will be practice



