

Ohio
Rural Life Survey
“Country Churches of
Distinction”



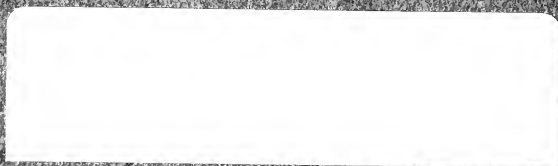
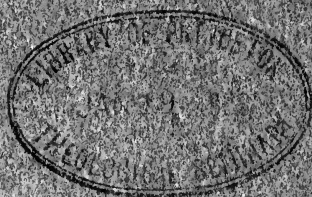
DIRECTED BY

The Department of Church and Country Life

BOARD OF HOME MISSIONS OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
IN THE U. S. A.

Warren H. Wilson, *Director*
Ralph A. Felton, *Field Director*

6 Fifth Avenue, New York City



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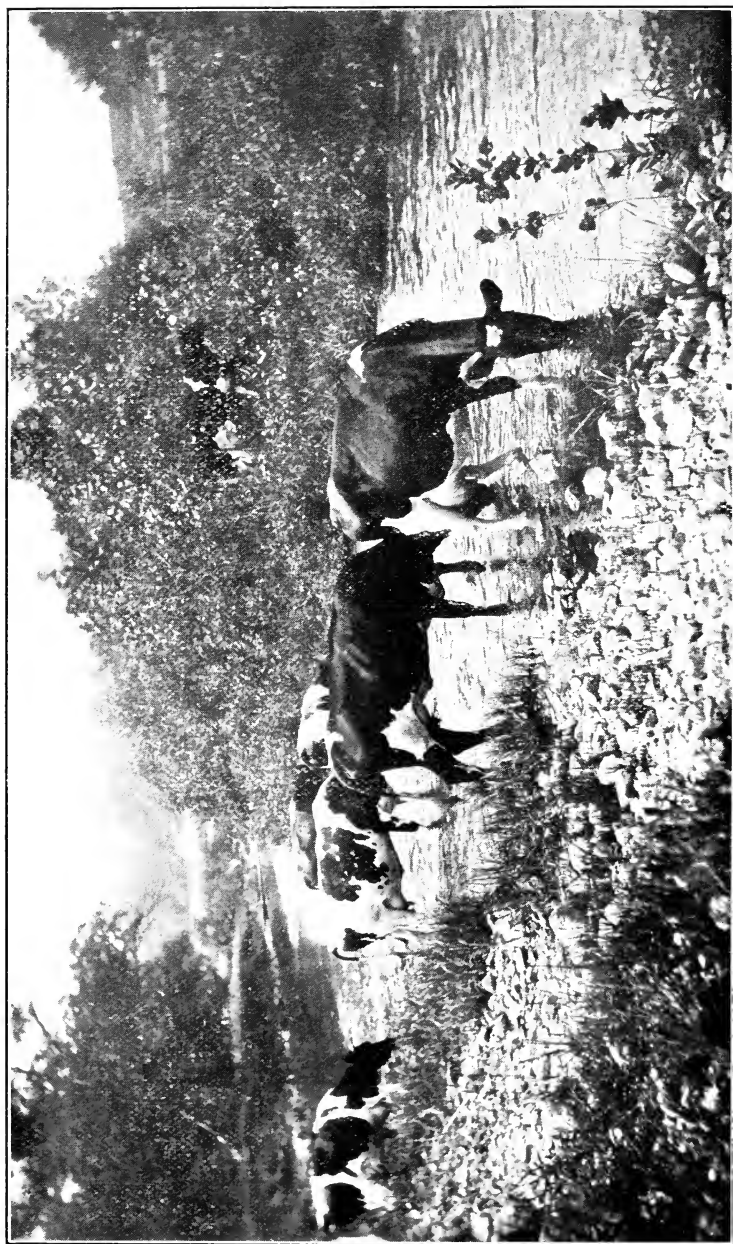


President W. O. Thompson
Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio
Chairman

Warren H. Wilson, *Director*
Ralph A. Felton, *Field Director*
Compiled by Miss Lois Neff

PRESBYTERIAN DEPARTMENT OF CHURCH AND
COUNTRY LIFE

156 Fifth Avenue, New York City



"THE CATTLE ON A THOUSAND HILLS ARE HIS"

Ohio Country Churches of Distinction

In this story are included sketches of country churches in the State of Ohio which came under observation during the Ohio Rural Life Survey in the summers of 1912 and 1913. These churches impressed the investigators, who visited each community in the counties surveyed, with their distinction and efficiency.

A successful church in the country wears no sign of being rural. It does not advertise farming. It has none of the complexion of a country life institute. It is just a church in a high state of efficiency. For while every church, urban, rural or foreign, reflects the social environment with the utmost precision, its own message is in all lands and places the same. The greater its efficiency, the more perfectly does it exhibit the signs of a gospel institution, a religious association, a society of spiritually minded people.

The reader must bear in mind that we make no attempt here to furnish a directory or cyclopedia. These are not all the successful churches in Ohio. We have attempted to make a selection, bearing in mind both type and denomination. Many other churches will be found in the state, whose people may recognize in the churches herein described their own work, and some of them are doing it better. It is the purpose of this story to help them see their own problem and to give them cheer and encouragement in work which sometimes seems to be commonplace and valueless.

We have attempted to classify the churches solely for the purpose of making the story readable. Our material is too scanty to justify a verdict or a final criticism upon the work of these churches. They are assigned to classes and grouped in a way that to those who know them may seem arbitrary. The attempt is made to single out that distinguishing mark in each church which is the clue to its success and efficiency.

It is interesting to see that the largest class of successful churches among those observed is made up of those which can be described by no eccentric or peculiar mark, but only under the term, "well organized." Evidently symmetry and completeness of work, the well-rounded plan well applied to the task in hand, these are the signs of

the church on which the outsider looks with satisfaction and with praise.

At the bottom of the list, represented by only one church in each instance, are three small classes, each of which has its advocates among country life theorists. These classes are: "Musical," "Evangelistic" and "Agricultural." Among all the churches studied only one was found that seemed to succeed by reason of its atmosphere of music, or evangelism or "rural-mindedness."

This story teaches—as the old writers used to say—that the most efficient thing in the country is a working church with a resident pastor, diligently developing its own life and ministering to the observed needs of the whole community. So far as this story is a contribution to the literature of country life, it means that what the churches need to do in the country is to develop their true organization according to the Christian tradition and to perfect the type of ministry common to all the Protestant churches. For here are as few signs of denominational peculiarity as there are of theoretical and academic eccentricity. The successful churches in rural Ohio are modern, well-developed, Protestant, responsive to the needs of the community, and filled with a conservative, substantial Christian spirit.

I. WELL ORGANIZED CHURCHES

The ten churches which stand out above others in the symmetry and completeness of their work are distinguished by no one mark of success. They present so many aspects of good church activity that one can only classify them as churches well administered. When one considers the great need of organization among country people he cannot but think that it is well to classify these churches at the top of the list. Probably no greater service can be rendered to the social economy of the country and to the farmer who tills the land than is given in a well-organized, smoothly working, symmetrical country church.

It must not be forgotten that the churches which are of value contain many of the marks of distinction mentioned later in the list. The group here described is assembled by its evidence of mature development of the Protestant type, according to the needs of the country community in Ohio.

Kirkersville Baptist Church, Licking County

In a little more than two years the enrollment of this Sunday School grew from 35 to 175 members. This came about through the organization of classes for young people. The school soon attained the rank of "Front Line." An organized class of young men, called the "Emergency Class," has a baseball team that plays matched games with other teams. An organized class of young women, the "Sunshine Class," leads the singing in the Sunday School. These two classes have contests occasionally and give socials and public entertainments. Other classes have been organized. Some of these report 100% attendance almost every Sabbath. With a superintendent, two associate superintendents, superintendents of cradle roll, home and missionary departments, complete organization of the Sunday School has been effected.

Rev. O. L. Martin had filled pastorates in cities from 5,000 to 25,000. A special course of study in the University of Chicago directed his interest to the work in small centers. In the spring of 1911 he accepted the pastorate of the Baptist Church of Kirkersville, a town of 300. At that time the church was at a low ebb. The only organization besides the Sunday School was the Woman's Missionary Society. A



TEACHERS' TRAINING CLASS, KIRKERSVILLE BAPTIST SUNDAY SCHOOL

Baptist Young People's Union was organized. Most of its members have joined the church during the past two years. A Junior Baptist Union is one of the inspiring features of this church. Children under 15 years of age are taught to conduct their own services, to read the Bible and lead in prayer. A Baptist Sisterhood was organized for the special object of helping to procure funds to build and equip a modern church building which is to be erected in 1914. The Woman's Missionary Society, also interested in securing money for the new building, meets every appointment of the denominational missionary societies. Student volunteers, students of different nationalities and missionaries often visit this school and make short addresses.

New Waterford Methodist Episcopal Church, Columbiana County

Of the 165 members of this church, there are 85—25 women, 40 young men and women and 20 boys and girls—who are engaged in the systematic study of missions. Until three years ago scarcely any attention was paid to missions. Interest was aroused by the Women's Foreign Missionary Society under the leadership of the pastor's wife. Every member of the church was provided with missionary literature. Monthly meetings for careful study were held by the women: quar-

terly teas were given at which a thank-offering was made. The young men and women met twice a month, when a discussion of the assigned lesson was followed by refreshments and a social hour. A missionary library was introduced and missionary addresses were given.

Farmers Institutes form a part of this church's program. A lecture course is given under the direction of the Ladies' Aid Societies of this church and the Presbyterian Church. The village of New Waterford has 580 inhabitants and 3 churches. Rev. J. H. Conkle, former pastor of this church, who is now 75 years of age, has retired from the ministry. He was succeeded October 1, 1913, by Rev. C. M. Kirk.

Yellow Creek Presbyterian Church, Columbiana County

There is a Woman's Home and Foreign Missionary Society, a missionary society among the young men and women and a mission band for the children. Besides sending a box to the Freedmen, the amount of \$425 was sent to mission boards last year. Contributions were also made to objects not in the presbyterial list.

The finances of this church are managed by the efficient Treasurer and Trustees with a system much like that of a bank. The matter of funds is always quietly discharged. The amount of \$600 was spent on repairs last year. Only those immediately transacting the business knew anything about it.

The "Brick Church," as it is popularly known, is situated in the open country in what is known far and wide as "Scotch Settlement." It is the only church edifice within a radius of from two to three miles. For more than eighty years this church has had the unflinching support of the community. No weather has been sufficiently severe or roads so impassable as to effect a marked decline in church attendance. There is a membership of 150. During the winter time the attendance is from 125 to 150. In the summer it ranges from 150 to 200.

The church plant is one of the best in the open country in the eastern part of Ohio. The present structure of red brick was erected in 1878 at a cost of \$10,000. It has two stories; the auditorium is in the upper part. Below there is a large lecture room used for prayer meeting besides two smaller rooms. A parsonage valued at \$2,000 adjoins the church. Rev. Henry P. Sanders gives full time to Yellow Creek Church. He is a young and progressive man, eager to lead his people into making the church a real community center.

Jefferson First Congregational Church, Ashtabula County

In 1908 a large addition was made to this church. The new part of the church building provides for a dining room, kitchen, parlor, room for primary department and separate class rooms. The trustees make out a budget each year for home expenses and for missions, and pledges are secured for the work of the church. All money is paid into the treasury on the weekly envelope system, and home expenses and the apportionment for missions have been paid. All the ladies' work is done through one organization. There is a well attended men's class which meets every Sunday. The pastor is Scout Master of an enthusiastic troop of Boy Scouts of the village. The troop includes boys of all denominations, Catholic as well as Protestant. The Rev. J. A. Goodrich is pastor of this church.

Methodist Episcopal Church at Croton, Licking County

For ten years this church has maintained a steady growth. The interest centers chiefly in the teaching function of the Sunday School and pulpit. The former is equipped with an able corps of teachers who are regular in attendance. The classes are full; the attendance averages 40 per cent. men and boys. The pastor teaches the Men's Bible Class known as the "Hustlers." There is a Bible history class, also one for mission study. The pastor has organized a troupe of Boy Scouts. The Woman's Society have a social session every month. Men's activities are arranged through the Sunday School. A weekly devotional service is one of the growing sources of power. In 1913, 75 persons were added to the church roll. The pastor of this church is Rev. R. G. Bowden.

Frazeysburg Methodist Episcopal Church, Muskingum County

This church formerly was a two-week appointment. The pastor arranged for services every Sunday. The Sunday school had been accustomed to meet in the afternoon; it began holding its session in the morning. The attendance rapidly increased from 85 to 140. The time of the meeting of the Epworth League was changed, and marked increase in attendance was the result. A Brotherhood was organized and the men's Bible class was built up. The men were called together for a social hour. Refreshments were served and short talks were given and an address was delivered by a special speaker. This class now numbers 50.

Adamsville Methodist Episcopal Church, Muskingum County

Each member of this church is sent a list of the members of the church, a list of the members of the Sunday School, also a list of the members of the Young People's Society. This method has been found invaluable in keeping the members of the church in touch with one another. The budget system is used in managing the finances. A contest in the Sunday School which lasted six months resulted in an increase of 200 per cent. in enrollment and 400 per cent. in average attendance.

Cherry Fork United Presbyterian Church, Adams County

This church conducts meetings in district school houses. These are either for evangelism, social fellowship, or called for the purpose of discussing questions of special interest to the community. A folding organ has been purchased for use at these school house meetings and a choir recruited from the school district leads the singing at evangelistic services. Both Sunday School and prayer meeting are held in a needy district without the assistance of the pastor.

There are unorganized meetings for men; there are general social gatherings for the women of the community; the Young People's Society has frequent socials. Last spring a music festival was conducted for twelve days. As a result of all these activities 112 have joined the church during the past three and a half years—90% of these were on confession.

The contributions to the church boards last year amounted to \$1,250; all financial obligations are promptly met. This church organization is now 110 years old. It has a membership of 222. The pastor is Rev. Frank Boyd, Cherry Fork, Ohio.

Brethren Church, West Alexandria, Preble County

In co-operation with a sister church seven miles away, the Brethren Church of West Alexandria published "The Brethren Voice," a parish paper of twelve pages. After a year's experiment the other church withdrew, but the Brethren Church at West Alexandria continue to publish a parish paper under the same name. In this paper there are personal items which make special reference to the young people of the church who are away at college, or have recently entered professional or business life; there are accounts of any social times included in the church's program; detailed announcements of special services, such as Rally Day or Communion; brief report of meeting of Official

Board; a resume of the activities of the Sunday School and of other organizations. In this way a medium between church and people is provided.

For years this church was contented with half-time preaching. Beginning with September, 1911, they employed the present pastor, Rev. J. A. Garber, for full time at a salary that increased the yearly budget more than half. The finances of this church are managed by a committee of five men who aim to secure a personal subscription both to current expenses and missions from each member. A carton of envelopes prepared by the Duplex Company is provided each contributor.

Periodical socials are held under the direction of one of the four organized classes or the Christian Endeavor. Other social-business meetings are the "All Day" meeting on New Year's Day, when a dinner is prepared at the church, reports of the past year are received and plans for the coming year are formulated; the men's annual dinner in March and the yearly outing or picnic for Sunday School and Church in August.

Cadiz Presbyterian Church, Harrison County

The pastor of this church makes the month of October a rally season in all departments of church work. He closes this period with a



AUDITORIUM, CADIZ PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

roll call communion, at which the roll of the entire congregation is called. The church auditorium has been taxed both times to accommodate the people. In the month of May the annual congregational meeting is held. On this occasion a church supper follows the business meeting; then a reception for the new members and a congregational social are held. About 400 people are present on this occasion.

Among the organized classes in the Sunday School is a men's Brotherhood. A member of this class leads the prayer meeting the third Wednesday every month.

This church has 609 members, 250 of whom live in the country. The parish covers about 100 square miles. Within the past two years 170 members were added to the church roll.

The interior of the church was recently beautified and improved architecturally. A modern steam heating plant was installed. An acousticon is to be added in the near future. In addition to contributing to funds necessary for the current expenses, last year this church made gifts to benevolences which amounted to almost \$2,500. Rev. Rodolph P. Lippincott has been pastor for the last two years.

II. FINANCIALLY EFFICIENT CHURCHES

All rural observers agree that the farmer is untrained in giving. Everyone who knows the country church appreciates the problem of church finance. In all the denominations efforts are made to bring the country churches to self-support and a financial efficiency. There is no greater or harder problem than this. We give here the list of churches, six in number, which have attained a mature financial system. The estimate put upon them is their own. They may be trusted to bear witness for themselves as to their greatest claim to distinction.

There is a special significance in the financially effective country church. The farmer in the country has not until recently had an income in terms of money. The older men on the farms in Ohio remember the time when money was but little used in the country community. The minister was paid very little in cash and very much in produce and other commodities. Within the lifetime of farmers now living the transformation has had to be made from an economy in which the countryman lived by what he produced to an economy in which he pays at the store for almost all that he consumes. The church has had to share in this change. It has been a hard struggle for the

church to secure an income for its minister out of the new income secured by the farmer from the land. The very fact that the farmer has not long had an income himself makes him slow in his contribution to the church. He does not yet feel sure that he belongs to the money-spending classes. The story of those churches which have trained the farmer to give, is, therefore, of brilliant and peculiar interest.

Jerusalem English Lutheran Church, Morgan County

The Jerusalem church may be considered unique among the country churches of its section because of its success with its finances. Its slogan is, "A pledged regular contribution from every member." Bi-monthly envelopes are used. It maintains an annual budget twice as large as some neighboring churches and does it with dignity, while some of the others in equally prosperous communities quibble over finances to a degree humiliating to both minister and church officials.

First Baptist Church of Byesville, Guernsey County

This church was thoroughly organized under the "Company Plan" by Rev. W. H. Wilson, the originator of this method, who for nine years was the pastor of this church. According to this plan the church membership is divided into companies of six members each, who in turn solicit the offerings, keeping their own records on cards provided for that purpose. The cards bearing the names of the six members of the company are enclosed in an envelope on which the six names are also written. The first member collects the first offering, the second member the second, etc., until the sixth collects the sixth offering. For the year 1905-1906 the membership of this church was 141; the offerings to benevolences amounted to \$328.87,—140 members contributing to all six of the benevolent societies. For the year 1906-1907, with a membership of 160, the offerings amounted to \$547.88 and at least 98% of the members of the church were enlisted in the work. The pastor did not claim that these offerings were large. His people were not wealthy. He must, however, be given credit for enlisting the help of almost every member. The Company Plan of organization has been endorsed by Secretaries of the State and Foreign Boards. Where this method is followed a member is compelled to work or fall entirely out of the organization. This method is being widely used throughout Ohio and is being introduced into other states. During Mr. Wilson's pastorate this church grew from a mission station of 15 members to a thoroughly organized church of 350 people.

Methodist Episcopal Church of Milford, Clermont County

During the past year the Methodist Episcopal Church of Milford, Ohio, raised a budget of \$3,852, all of which was given through regular subscriptions and pledges. The Woman's Foreign Missionary Society made contributions amounting to \$289; the Woman's Home Missionary Society contributed \$247. Collections and "pay socials" are forbidden. This financial system reacts on the spiritual life of the church. It has experienced a steady growth, having now 429 members, 64 of whom were added during the past year. The societies for young people in this church maintain themselves without "pay socials." The Junior and Senior Leagues each support a student on the foreign field. The young people of the church give an outing to 100 of the less fortunate people of Cincinnati, have a Personal Workers' League, furnish the evening choir for the regular church service and show a readiness to take part in the devotional meetings.

Emanuel Reformed Church, Wayne County

There are other churches three miles in every direction from Emanuel Reformed Church. To the south is an Evangelical Church; north, Presbyterian and Methodist; west, Church of God and United Brethren; east, United Brethren and Evangelical churches. There are also two Dunkard churches in the community. In Chester Township, with a population of 1420, there are twelve churches. Six of these have grown in membership during the past five years. Of these six churches Emanuel Church, situated at crossroads equi-distant from



EMANUEL REFORMED CHURCH

three towns, shows next to the largest per cent. of increase for the past five years. It now has a membership of 135. There are twenty-two under twenty-one years of age.

This church possesses a building valued at \$15,000, which provides special rooms for the Sunday school. There are organized classes for men and women. The church manages its finances in this fashion. At the beginning of the year the budget is made out. Later a book containing the contributions is printed, and each member receives a copy. In this book every contribution is recorded and every cent is accounted for. And there is always money in the treasury to meet bills when they are due.

Rawson United Brethren Church, Hancock County

Various methods are devised for raising the amount of money necessary for church expenses. Rev. W. D. Bishop of the United Brethren Church at Rawson, found the results of the following plan both prompt and adequate: The large membership was divided into four districts and two solicitors were appointed for each district. A day was named for the canvass, but two weeks prior to the making of the canvass the amount of the budget was announced. The sum of \$1,200 was required to pay all obligations and every member was informed that he would be called upon to make a pledge toward this amount. A church rally day at which the canvassers would report, was announced. A literary program was prepared and rendered before the 250 members and friends present. The solicitors reported pledges amounting to \$1,239, which amount would doubtless have been even larger, but a number of the members could not be seen on that day. The church rally was closed with a banquet. The work of that day has contributed greatly to the church attendance and to the offerings, too. On the Sunday following the meeting the regular evening collection amounted to \$148.

Cedarville United Presbyterian Church, Greene County

The Cedarville United Presbyterian Church is distinguished for its excellent financial system. The church publishes a directory and financial statement each year in which are given the names of the members and the amount contributed by each toward salary and incidentals, alongside of which is the amount contributed to missions and benevolences. Contributions as small as five cents from children as young as eight years are fully itemized. This system when installed largely increased the church's income. The receipts for the year ending March

31, 1913, amounted to more than \$6,500, \$1,200 of which was contributed to foreign missions, and \$1,659 to home missions, making an average of \$10.25 per member to mission boards. The total amount contributed to pastor's salary and regular congregational expenses amounted to \$2,050, whereas the total amount contributed to missions amounted to \$2,859. The members of the Junior Missionary Society, in which children from six to fourteen years are enrolled, are raising \$40 to build a mud dried brick church in India.

During the past year repairs, including the frescoing of the church, new art windows, cement sidewalks and gutters, were made. The cost of these repairs amounted to more than \$1,400, yet no special subscription was taken for these extras. Announcement concerning them was made from the pulpit and the members of the church did the rest.

The pastor, Rev. James S. M. McMichael, has shown interest in the young people of the village by coaching the college and high school athletic teams. He has also organized a basket-ball team among the young people of the church. Cedarville has a population of 1,000. There are three churches in the village.

III. BOYS' WORK

The interpreting of the message of God to the boy and the girl has been the prophet's task in our time. To none have we listened more attentively than to those who have understood the heart of the growing boy. We appreciate that his are the days of dreams, of visions and of high resolves. The adolescent boy and girl are coming to a great place in our religious life.

The story, therefore, of country churches in Ohio which have attained a distinction in serving the boys of the community and purging the turbulent stream of their emotions with the gospel will be read with lively interest.

Bluffton Methodist Episcopal Church, Allen County

After a fine new parsonage had been erected the trustees offered the old one for rent, but feeling that this building could be of greater value to the church and community if converted into a Parish House,



TOPSY-TURVY AT CAMP ADULLAM, KNIGHTS OF KING ARTHUR,
BLUFFTON METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

some of the partitions were removed, a kitchen, pantry and dining room equipped, and a home was made for various organizations. The two rooms upstairs were equipped for boys' clubs. Almost every day and evening, except Sunday, some sort of a meeting was held in the Parish House. It was used for prayer meeting, for meetings of the Ladies' Aid Society, also for those of the Brotherhood, for Bible study and teachers' training classes, for meetings of the various boys', girls' and young people's clubs, for socials held with the various organizations, for W. C. T. U. meetings, for meetings of men held during the Local Option Campaign, for the Men and Religion Forward Movement, for union prayer meetings, for dinners and banquets—in short for any good purpose which would help to build up both church and community.

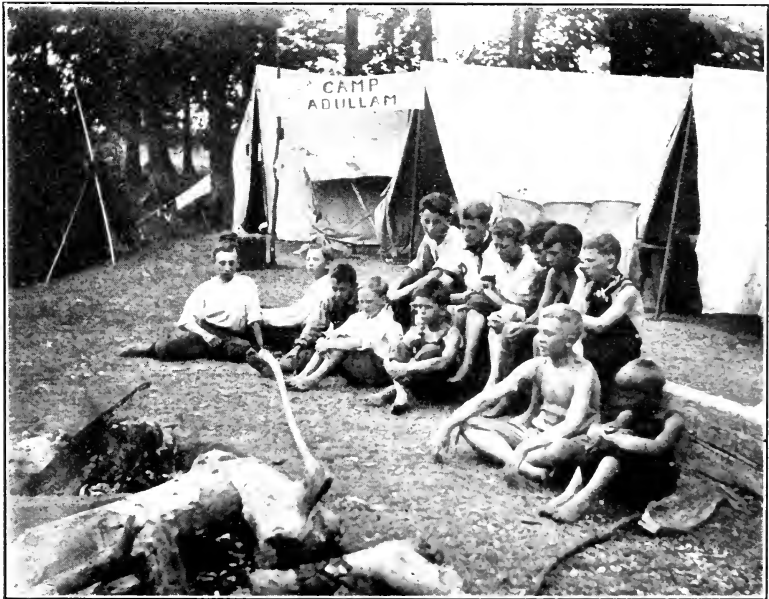
Besides the Methodist Brotherhood for men, the pastor organized a Brotherhood of David and Knights of King Arthur for boys. Both of these organizations have accomplished almost miracles in character building. The boys' clubs borrowed books from the Traveling State Library, built missionary exhibits and gave programs, in addition to holding religious and social gatherings.

A boys' choir was formed. Both boys and young men attend church

services in large numbers and take part in various church activities. Almost every member of the Sunday school becomes a member of the church and it is not an uncommon sight to see as many as forty boys and young men at one communion table to receive the sacrament. In three years there were 109 additions, the male exceeding the female by 8%. The present membership is 340. There are six churches in Bluffton, a town of 2,000 inhabitants.

The Sunday school with an average attendance of 250 has ranked three successive years as a "Front Line" school, furnishing a number of trained teachers, using graded lessons and maintaining three large organized adult classes. The pastor considered the Parish House the cause of the success attained by the Sunday school.

Other organizations of this church are Home Guards, Wesleyan Guild, Home Missionary Society, Epworth and Junior Leagues. A new building costing not less than \$15,000 is to be erected. Rev. John Harding Butler was pastor of this church for three years and during that time was secretary of the Allen County Sunday School Association. Since September, 1913, the Bluffton M. E. Church has had Rev. W. R. Burton for its pastor.



AROUND THE CAMP FIRE



MISS MINA FRY, TEACHER OF CLASS SIX, MINERAL
METHODIST EPISCOPAL SUNDAY SCHOOL

Mineral Methodist Episcopal Church, Athens County

Mineral is a mining village of about 200 inhabitants. In the summer of 1912 a young woman from near Cincinnati who had recently accepted a position in Athens, spent one Sunday in Mineral. She noticed that there was a crowd of young men loafing about the railroad station. The fact that none of these young men were present at Sunday school attracted her attention. She decided to spend every Sunday in Mineral. On June 30th, 1912, she started a Sunday School class with five boys enrolled. On November 28th of the same year this group, known as Class Six was organized. The enrollment was then 35; by September 28th, 1913, it had increased to 70.

Last winter under the auspices of Class Six, a lecture course was given. The professors of Ohio University gave their services free. The boys bore all traveling expenses and arranged for the entertainment of the speakers over night. They attended to every detail. They

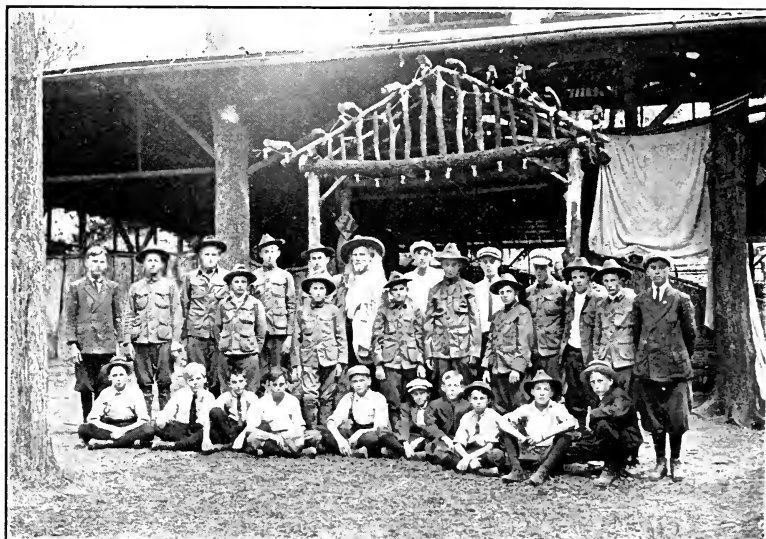
met their distinguished guests when they arrived and made sure that they were properly introduced. Plans are being made for another lecture course this year.

Mothers' Day was given special recognition by Class Six. A program appropriate to the occasion was rendered. In addition to giving a carnation to every mother present at the services, a bunch was sent to every mother in the village who was not able to attend Sunday school.

This class has four standing committees: Membership, Sympathy, Devotional and Entertainment. A business meeting is held every month at which a program is rendered. The motto of the class is, "Be ye doers of the Word and not hearers only"; its aim is, "Help somebody to-day." The splendid record attained by Class Six is all due to the faithfulness and tact of Miss Mina Fry, the young woman who organized it and is now the teacher.

Yellow Springs Presbyterian Church, Greene County

This church owns a \$25,000 white stone building containing ten rooms, one of which is a reading room. The pastor is attempting to make this church a community center. During the past five years there has been an increase of 125% in church membership. At the



BOY SCOUTS, STOCKPORT DISCIPLES CHURCH

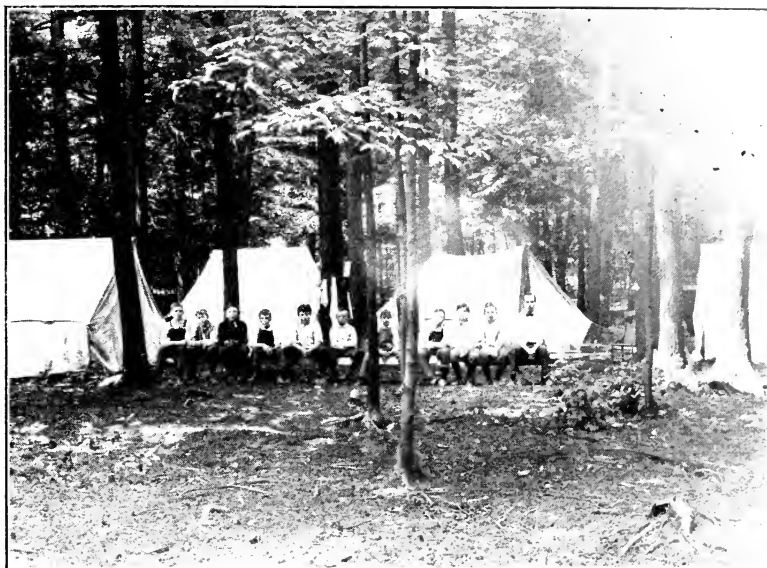
last of a series of socials held during 1911 by an organized class of boys ranging from fourteen to seventeen years of age, the pastor opened discussion concerning church membership. Later the proposition of joining the church was presented to the boys individually and every member of the class allied himself with the church. This class has gymnasium practice twice a week and an organized baseball team coached by the teacher. The Sunday school superintendent, a college trained, practical business man, always has his home open to the young people for good social times. Mr. P. W. Drake is the superintendent; Rev. W. R. Graham is pastor.

Stockport Church, Disciples of Christ, Morgan County

In connection with this church there is maintained by the pastor a Boy Scouts Troop, the most successful boys' organization in Morgan County. This troop has a baseball team. Last summer (1913) these Boy Scouts encamped for ten days at the Chautauqua at McConnellsville. The pastor added seven members to his church in less than a year without special evangelistic effort. Through his intimate association with his Boy Scouts and his young people, he is able to do constructive work all the year around.



MIDDLEFIELD ATHLETIC CLUB BASEBALL TEAM AND ITS MANAGER,
REV. C. M. McCONNELL



MIDDLEFIELD BOY SCOUTS IN CAMP

Middlefield Methodist Episcopal Church, Geauga County

When the Methodist Episcopal Church at Middlefield was planned the boys were not forgotten. Besides an auditorium, Sunday school room, pastor's study and kitchen, there are a gymnasium and boys' club room. The church is kept open several nights in the week and a competent person is in charge when the young people meet in the gymnasium for a social or for gymnasium work. The young people of the village instead of meeting on the street corners and in disreputable places come to the church. It has indeed become the social center of the community.

For three years the pastor was manager of the baseball team of the town. He arranged the schedule and took all the responsibility of the games. Several star players were developed and the team was held in good repute throughout the county. The conduct of the players was the cause of much favorable comment and the undesirable features of the game were reduced to the minimum. During the fall and winter months when it was impossible to have outdoor sports, the members of the baseball team met from time to time in the gymnasium and took systematic training.

Boys from twelve to fifteen years of age were under the leadership

of the pastor in a troop of Boy Scouts. They had their headquarters in the boys' club room in the church and athletic training was given them in the church gymnasium. During the winter months the boys met one night each week when they had games and athletic training under the direction of the pastor. In the summer they took long hikes through the country and camped for a week.

Through this type of work and other of a like nature the church came to have a standing in the community that was strategic. It is the center of the life of the community and it became an easy matter to finance the various enterprises of the church. The people felt that they were getting value in return for their investment and the church found its life by losing it in the vital, throbbing interests of the community. A change of pastors has not changed the policy and purpose of the church. Although Rev. C. M. McConnell who initiated much of this community service has gone to another field, the work goes on.

IV. RESIDENT PASTORS

Few realize the extent to which the minister has joined the exodus from the country. In the Eastern States, including Pennsylvania, New York and the Virginias under that term, there are many ministers living in the country among farmers. But during the past generation the occupations once known in the country have moved into town and the minister has gone with the merchant, the shoemaker, the lawyer, the doctor, the worker in iron and in wood. The States from Ohio westward, especially those settled in large measure since the Civil War, show no signs of the early settlement of pastors in the country, which we find in the East.

Therefore the resident minister is in these states a distinguished figure in the country. Probably in this story of successful churches in Ohio a larger number should be listed under this heading. In a goodly number of churches this one mark of success seems to be a clue to the character of the church. All honor to the pastors and to their people who have seen that the country church needs a minister living with the farmers in the open fields and teaching them the way of life in the country! May the time soon come when the minister who lives

in town where he does not preach, and preaches in the country where he does not live, will see a new light and consecrate himself and his family to a resident pastorate in the open country.

Bethel Presbyterian Church, Columbiana County

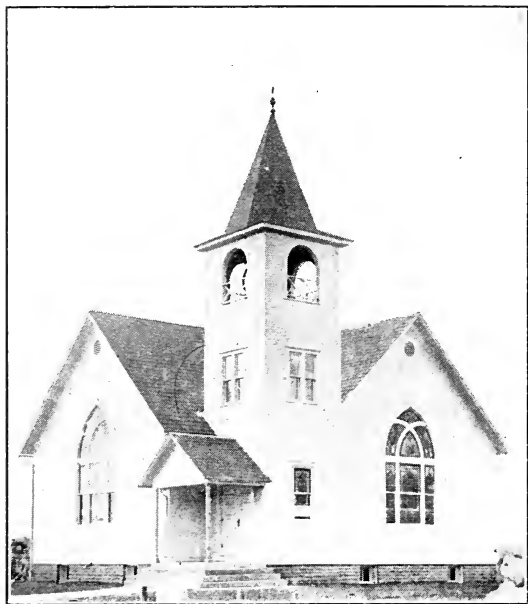
In a section of the state that is hilly and thinly populated Bethel Presbyterian Church has more than held its own. It has prospered. This church, standing in the open country, is five miles from the railroad and six miles from an electric line. Roads are not improved. Most of the members live at a distance of 3 or 4 miles; some as far as 6 miles. There has been a continual exodus from this community to neighboring cities. Yet in spite of all that is unfavorable to church growth, Bethel now has a church roll of 243 members.

This church has been successful in holding its pastors, there being only four ministers in sixty years. The present pastorate is the fifth since 1852. The pastors of this church have made great sacrifices, but not without results. The tithing of their income by several families, erection of a family altar and faithfulness in church attendance are fruits of the consecrated lives of Bethel's pastors. For fifteen years there has been a resident pastor. A parsonage, with 25 acres of land, is furnished.

There being no easy access to the city, this church has not let slip



BETHEL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



RILEY CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH

the opportunity of making itself the social as well as the religious centre of the community. The parish, which covers almost a township, has a large number of young people. At a recent Sunday evening preaching service there were more than 100 young men and women present. The good music furnished helps to attract the young people.

There is a society of Christian Endeavorers, also a Ladies' Missionary Society. By means of a contest the attendance at Sunday School was doubled. A Bible class for men has been organized with five officers and three committees: Lookout, Social and Pastor's Aid. Men who formerly were never present are now interested in the Sunday School. On Sunday afternoon a member of the men's class successfully conducts a branch Sunday School at a school house four miles from the church.

Cottage prayer meetings, or services in neighboring school houses, are held on Wednesday evening. Many who have not been interested in matters religious are attracted to these services and later join the church. Just now plans are being made by a committee appointed by the pastor, Rev. M. H. Woolf, and the Session, for a Country Life Institute to be held during the winter.

Riley Creek Baptist Church, Hancock County

For forty-five years Riley Creek Baptist Church never had more than half the time of its minister and never had him living in the parish. In 1910 a modern church building, valued at \$7,000, was erected. Later Rev. C. F. Schneider was engaged to give his whole time to the church and to live among his parishioners. In addition to receiving a salary of \$600 the pastor has the use of a 60 acre farm.

In two years the church membership advanced from 103 to 145. The Sunday School now enrolls 125 and has an average attendance of 85. The morning services draw 140 people on an average. In the evening the average attendance is 200. All church expenses are promptly paid.

Sugar Creek United Presbyterian Church, Montgomery County

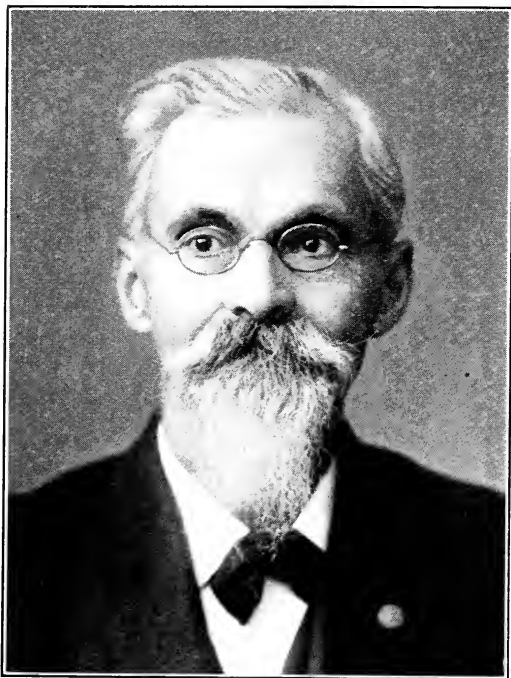
Since its organization in 1804 Sugar Creek United Presbyterian Church has had only 13 pastors. A well kept parsonage with extensive grounds is provided and resident pastors are the rule. The members of this church have demanded efficient men in the pulpit and have paid salaries large enough to attract men of the highest caliber. Dr. J. B. Michael after he had served this church 16 years, accepted the presidency of Monmouth College. After 25 years in that position of honor he resumed the pastorate at Sugar Creek, serving four and a half years. Rev. John A. Henderson, who has served prominent churches of his denomination, is now pastor of this church.

Sugar Creek Presbyterian Church is situated in the open country seven miles from the city of Dayton. Its membership of 155 is comprised chiefly of country folk. A new and completely equipped building of gray Bedford limestone, costing \$20,000, was dedicated June 22, 1913. This is the fourth edifice erected by this congregation since its organization 109 years ago. A kitchen and dining room in the new building afford ample facilities for social gatherings. The program for this winter includes an open house meeting for every Friday evening.

The Duplex Envelope system is used. Many of the members are tithers, others pay even more than a tenth.

Wilkesville Presbyterian Church, Vinton County

Over one-half of the 90 members of this church are farmers. The Presbyterians of Wilkesville support a resident minister and believe in keeping one minister long enough to give him a chance to do his best



REV. CHARLES B. TAYLOR, PH. D.

work. They expect their minister to live in their midst and take part in the life of the community. One pastor served this church 12 years; his son, Dr. Chas. B. Taylor, 10 years; the grandson, now in a country church in Missouri, was also pastor of this church for a while. The influence of this church on the community life has always been noticeable and permanently effective. Removals to the city and the depletion of the soil are now causing a decline in church membership, yet in its 94 years of service it has furnished 10 ministers of the Gospel and 57 teachers, 25 of whom are numbered in the present congregation. Wilkesville is a hamlet of 203 people.

St. Jacob's Reformed Church, Columbiana County

St. Jacob's Reformed Church in Center Township, Columbiana County, is a country church with over 200 members, nearly 20% of whom are under 21 years of age. There are five other churches within three miles, all of them losing ground. This neighborhood has suffered from rural exodus. Yet this church has grown steadily. It has had

a resident pastor for fifteen years giving full time to this one congregation. It pays him \$700 and furnishes him with a parsonage and twenty-five acres of land. Here is a minister serving a country church which belongs to the country, who knows his people personally, ministers to all of his extended parish and has built up a strong efficient organization.

V. SUNDAY SCHOOLS

The country church is generally not as strong in its teaching organization as it should be. It compares but ill with the town church. The great Sunday Schools maintained in some of the cities are not matched in the open country. One longs to have the old days return of thorough Bible instruction and one longs in vain for the machinery and the method by which this may be accomplished. The people living in the country need instruction in Bible truth, in the Christian tradition and in the missionary work of the church.

Therefore the churches which have built their work upon efficient Sunday Schools have a story to tell.

Ebenezer Mennonite Church, Allen County

Entire families are enrolled in this Sunday School. To this factor the pastor acknowledges is largely due the success of the church, as well as the Sunday School. There are 375 on the church roll, 65 of whom are under twenty years of age. Within the past three years 114 have joined the church. The Sunday School has organized classes, which hold social and literary gatherings at the private homes once a month. There is a Teachers' Training Class and a well attended Teachers' Meeting is held every week.

Ebenezer Mennonite Church is situated in the open country in a very prosperous Swiss community in Allen County. Rev. W. S. Gottshall, Bluffton, Ohio, pastor of this church, is President of the Home Mission Board of the General Conference of Mennonites.

Christian Church at Shreve, Wayne County

The church building, valued at \$10,000 has ten rooms, nine of which are designed for the use of the Sunday School. There are maps, small chairs, tables, charts and blackboard provided. All the adult classes

are organized. The young men's Bible class has a base-ball team that has played several out of town games. The young people of this church contribute generously to missionary enterprises. They are now educating a boy in China. Of a church membership of 517, 15% are under 21 years of age.

Old Fort United Brethren Church, Seneca County

The Old Fort United Brethren Sunday School, with an enrollment of 231, has 37 members who have graduated from the standard course for teacher training. In November, 1913, there were 11 members in the third year class of the advanced teacher training course who had only one more book to study before completing the course. This



GRADUATES IN THE STANDARD COURSE FOR TEACHER TRAINING,
OLD FORT UNITED BROTHERS CHURCH

Sunday School is a "front line" school. On last "decision day" 23 of its members joined the church. To the adult Bible class is due credit for bringing a large number into the Sunday School and church. The fact that the efficient training of the teachers of the Bible classes is emphasized is no doubt another factor contributing to the growth of this church. Mr. C. C. Drown, a leading business man of Old Fort, has charge of the teacher training class. To his good sense and Christian living the United Brethren Church owes much.

Peebles Methodist Episcopal Church, Adams County

Many churches are wondering how they may enlist their young people. The Methodist Episcopal Church at Peebles, Ohio, has 80 members under 21 years of age. These comprise almost one-third of the numerical strength of the church.

Inquiry leads back to the Sunday school. Within the past two years, 62 of these young people have passed from the Sunday school into the church. A decision day held in the Sunday school during the revival services was helpful, but of much greater value was the careful personal work of the Sunday School teachers. They talked with the children and visited the parents, who, in turn, were persuaded to co-operate by talking with the children concerning the importance of making a decision. The transition was made easy and natural; about three-fourths of the children joined before 13 years of age. Because of careful work in following up what was begun, the results have been definite and lasting. Something is always being done to meet the needs of the young people; every winter several socials are given; the teachers and officers of the Sunday School make frequent visits at the homes of the pupils. Part of the credit for the success of this Sunday School is due to an efficient secretary whose accurate records and keen oversight keep absent pupils from being neglected and forgotten. This Sunday School has now become so big that the children can find nothing outside of it quite so good.

The pastor frankly admits his indebtedness to this "working Sunday School." In two neighboring charges in smaller villages he has not been able to add a young person to the church roll in two years. His work counts, he has discovered, only where he has an organized body of devoted Christians consecrated to bringing the children into the church and helping them to grow up into an understanding of religious responsibility.

Macksburg Methodist Episcopal Church, Washington County

The village of Macksburg with its 450 inhabitants has one church, the Methodist Episcopal. The building which was erected in 1907 is most attractive in appearance and is a source of pride to the people of the village.

There is an Epworth League meeting once a week; prayer meeting is conducted twice a week. The Sunday School has 196 enrolled, in addition to a Home Department of 45 and a Cradle Roll of 26. Graded

lessons are used in the primary and junior departments. A member of the Sunday School who is an accomplished artist illustrates the lessons of all the departments. Mrs. Alice Blakeslee, a woman of tact, education and means is the superintendent of the Sunday School. She is ably assisted by the officers and seventeen teachers of this school.



MACKSBURG METHODIST EPISCOPAL SUNDAY SCHOOL

VI. COMMUNITY CHURCHES

The dream of the pastor and of the leader in rural religious life is that each community shall have one church and that each church shall serve in the broadest way the religious needs of its community. It is the old conception of the parish. It embodies in local form the ideals of service, of church co-operation and comity, which are in the hearts of all. We therefore are deeply interested in those examples of close relation between the community and the church. Many more such instances might perhaps have been found, but the following list of churches expresses in the mind of the writers their sense of an ideal of social service: the country church which ministers to the country community.

Hiram Disciple Church, Portage County

Hiram is a small village situated in a dairying section of the state, quite isolated, the nearest railroad being two and one-half miles distant. Yet the community has a most progressive and intellectual atmosphere, for the citizens are for the most part professors of Hiram College or in some other way identified with that institution. There is the "His-



CENTENNIAL CLASS, HIRAM DISCIPLE CHURCH

tory Club," also, the "Research Club"; both follow a definite plan of study throughout the year. A "Young Married Folks Club" seeks to interest all young married people in the village and in the country. Its functions are wholly social.

There is only one other community in the township—Hiram Rapids, a small village $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles distant. The moral tone of this place is far below that of Hiram. It has a church that revives periodically for a short time after several years of abandonment, and has been of several denominations. To all intents the township is a whole, centering in Hiram, and the Disciples Church of Hiram is a community church in every sense of the word.

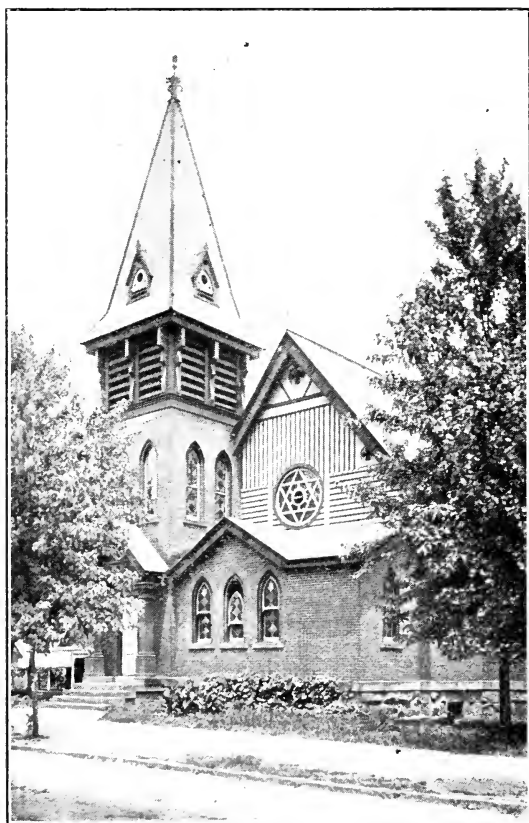
This church owns a large brick structure, valued at \$20,000, in excellent condition. There are 345 members and the number constantly increases in spite of the fact that the total population of the township is decreasing. Rev. John E. Pounds, the pastor, lives in his parish. He is thoroughly awake and is seeking to enlist the church for community service.

The church and college co-operate closely. During the college year, music is furnished for the church services by students trained by the teacher of music in the conservatory. Most of the teachers in the Sunday School are college students. During the morning service one of the young women students has charge of a "nursery" in the basement of the church, in order that mothers with younger children need not be kept at home by reason of this fact. The Christian Endeavor is supported jointly by college students and the young people of the

village. The members of the college faculty are instrumental in making the prayer meeting a success.

This church has a Brotherhood which meets monthly for the discussion of some live question. Social features are not neglected. The Centennial Bible Class "to which every member belongs, whether he will or no, provided he is not a member of any other class" is an outstanding feature of this church. Bible study is conducted for this class by the pastor during the regular Sunday School hour. The average attendance is about 65. There are classes conducted by the Dean of Men and the wife of the college president for the students of Hiram college.

A canvass of the community has been made and effort is being put forth to reach those who have hitherto not belonged to church.



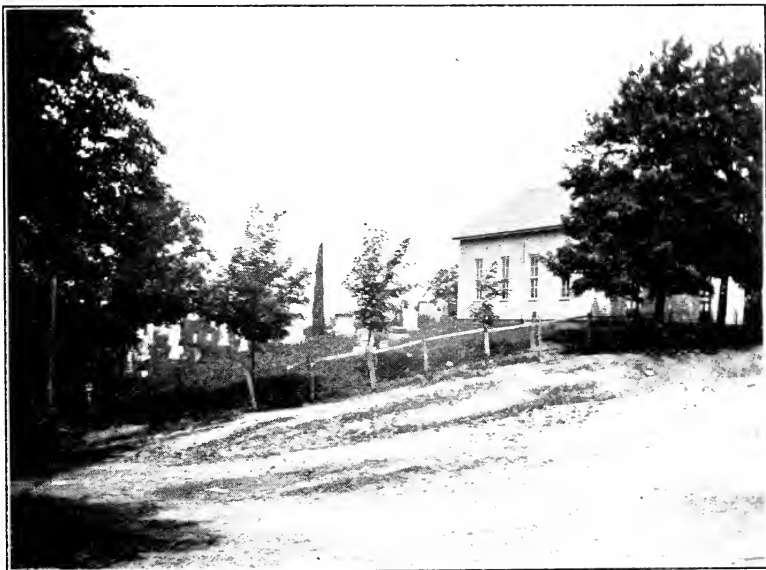
MALTA METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Malta Methodist Episcopal Church, Morgan County

This is a strong village church. Malta has a population of 971. There is one other church in the village. The Methodist Episcopal Church enrolls as members about 325 of the people of the village, a little over one-third of the population, an exceptional proportion. This year there were 32 accessions. This church now has 109 members more than it had five years ago. The Sunday School has a fine orchestra. A spirit of genuine friendliness and sociability is manifested in the Epworth League.

Locust Grove M. E. Church, Vinton County

This church is situated in the open country seven miles from any railway. Working with the school house beside it, it has controlled the life of its community for the last 46 years. The result of this kind of



LOCUST GROVE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

leadership has been the producing of strong men. Because of the service of that church and school have gone forth to serve the world two ministers, two judges of the Court of Common Pleas and two professors in colleges.

Hopewell Presbyterian Church, Holmes County

This church, standing in the open country, is the oldest religious organization in Holmes County. The present building was erected seven years ago, at a cost of \$7,200, not including much donated material and labor. It is a modern frame building, having four rooms and a basement in which are dining room, kitchen, furnace room and lighting plant. A commodious parsonage with four acres of ground adjoins the church. Both buildings and grounds are kept in good order. There are 182 members on the church roll; 150 are enrolled in the Sunday School.

This community is smaller than it was 20 years ago, consequently the membership of the church is less than it was. On the other hand, the church is now self-supporting, which it was not formerly, and besides supporting a pastor it contributes generously to benevolences.

The pastor devotes all of his time to Hopewell Church. Two years ago he organized a Farmers' Club, which has been superseded by a Grange. Socials of various kinds are held in the church, in the schools and in the homes of the community. Lectures and entertainments are given from time to time in the church. Rev. Charles Marston, the pastor, is using every means to make Hopewell Presbyterian Church respond to every need of the community.

Bloomfield United Presbyterian Church, Muskingum County

Located in a village of less than a hundred people for more than half a century this church has maintained a strong congregation. The present membership is 230, one-fourth of whom recently came from a rival church now disorganized. The union has proved a happy one—a new life and a new spirit are manifest.

An Every Member Canvass in March the last two years has increased the offerings for missions. Most of the members of the church belong to the Sunday School which is superintended by Mr. F. C. Simms. There is a young men's Bible class, an organized class of older men numbering 35, and a teacher training class. The young people's society give frequent socials. Other organizations in the church give socials occasionally. The building formerly used by the disorganized church is to be made a social center.

The pastor is the Rev. Dr. S. W. Gilkey, who was once a public school teacher and later a college professor, hence is deeply interested in the development of his young people. Last year he assisted the

public school teachers of adjoining districts organize and maintain a literary society. He has helped start a similar society for this winter. Reared on a farm he is deeply interested in scientific agriculture and takes an active part in the annual farmers' institute.

VII. CIVIC EFFICIENCY

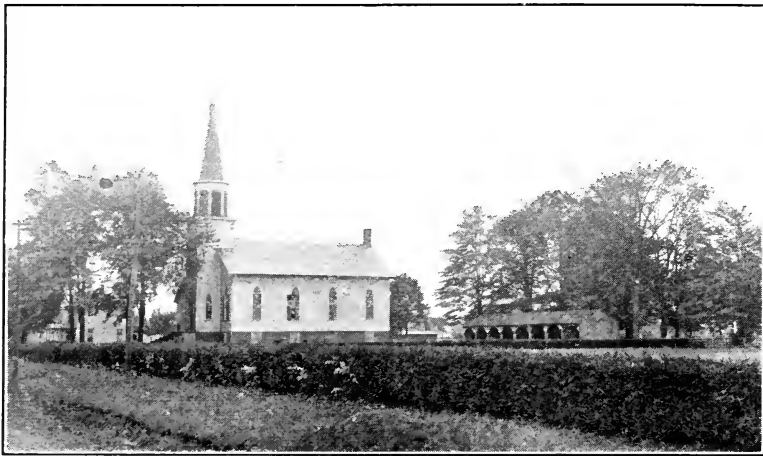
The number of churches interested in affairs once called secular is very great. Probably those here listed seem too scanty in comparison with the whole number throughout the State of Ohio. But the story of these will serve to remind us of the many churches whose distinction in the eyes of the community is their broad and catholic spirit; the interest of their people and their ministers in literary, social and economic concerns.

The old Puritan minister was a pastor of all his people. But often his successor has inherited a doctrine not from the Puritans, but from the Philistines, that the church should have to do as little as possible with human life. Therefore the churches which enlarge their heart, which lengthen their cords and strengthen their stakes, in order to give satisfactory shelter to every interest of the whole community, are among the successful and efficient churches.

Huntsburg Methodist Episcopal Church, Geauga County

Last summer under the auspices of this church a two days' Chautauqua was held. Huntsburg, a village of 225 people, is located in a prosperous dairying community. That the Methodist Episcopal Church of Huntsburg is interested in the development of the community is shown by the fact that "The Scientific Production of Clean Milk" was a subject lectured upon at the Chautauqua. Other topics discussed were "The Modern Interpretation of the Book of Job" and "The New Country Church." Good music, both instrumental and vocal, was furnished. The meetings were held in the park in the afternoon and in the town hall in the evening.

Other enterprises promoted by this church are home talent entertainments, a lecture course and a library of good standard works. A



ORWELL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

base-ball team not confined to church members, but to "boys of the town," was organized. A new social life has been infused into the church through an organized young people's class. Rev. E. A. Beale is the pastor of this church.

Orwell Presbyterian Church, Ashtabula County

The pastor of this church has given much attention to Country Life Institutes and Grange work. He is a strong promoter of community life, having helped organize and direct a Civic League. This organization is urging the incorporation of the village. Certain improvements in the cemetery were made by the League.

The library is receiving much attention. The pastor of the Orwell Presbyterian Church is president of the Public Library Board and money is being raised to secure funds sufficient to have the library open every evening in the week, to buy new books and to enlarge the building, in order to have room for athletic equipment.

For three years there has been a lawn tennis club, which takes part in tournaments. This is mainly the work of the pastor, who organized the club and has been its president ever since. The Men's Bible Class of the Sunday School is supporting in-door games this winter. Rev. Henry E. Nicklen is pastor of the Orwell Presbyterian Church; he is also president of the Civic League.

VIII. SOCIAL LIFE

If you ask the young men going into the ministry what they propose to do in their daily association with their people, in one form or another they will answer that they propose to organize the social life of the church. A new insight into the value of human association and the place of God in human society has come to us. We conceive of the Holy Spirit still creating and refreshing the world through the social mingling of men with one another. Especially is this true in the country, where work is solitary and social intercourse is a blessing. The churches which have succeeded in warming up the countryside with a hearty, cordial social spirit are many and of them all we enumerate doubtless too few. But their work and their success will find an echo in many churches which would not confess the prominence of social organization in their methods of work.

Jersey Presbyterian Church, Licking County

Three years ago a basement was put under the entire church. In this addition there is a kitchen, also reading and social rooms. The basement has become the center of everything rural; is used by the school as well as by the church. Every year a big Thanksgiving dinner is given here free of any charge.

The pastor is much interested in athletics. He umpires ball games and tennis tournaments. A court for the latter has been provided at the rear of the church.

Within the past three and a half years, during the pastorate of Rev. M. E. Wright, there have been 135 additions; 115 of these have been on confession. The Christian Endeavor Society of this church furnished a school room for a teacher in Chattanooga. Four young men of this congregation are now preparing to enter the ministry.

Church of Christ at Bethel, Clermont County

There are organized classes for young people in the Sunday School. Each of these holds an annual picnic. In addition to these picnics the Sunday School as a whole has one each year. During the past year the Senior Christian Endeavor Society had three social gatherings; the Junior Society two. Friends who were not members were invited to these socials. This church has 250 members enrolled. Of these there are 66 boys and 92 girls under 21 years of age.

Kilbuck Church of Christ, Holmes County

In a village of 400 inhabitants where there are two churches, the Kilbuck Church of Christ in the past eleven years has grown from a membership of 125 to 300. In the same period the average attendance of the Bible School has increased from 60 to 175. Since the church has been recruited largely through the Bible School, much attention has been given the latter. There are organized adult classes, two of which number more than 50. The church building has 9 rooms in addition to 5 in the basement, and there is a complete equipment of maps, Bibles, song books; there is also a library.

Social life has not been neglected. Several times a year all the members of the church eat together with their friends in the church basement, at which time a miscellaneous program is rendered.

One feature of this church is its magazine club. The men subscribe to the various magazines jointly, and then exchange them with one another.

Another feature of this church is the ten deaconesses who have charge of all charitable work. Rev. W. R. Walker has been the pastor of this church for more than eleven years.

IX. BROTHERHOODS OF MEN

Doubtless the Protestant church was managed too long by the men, for we have been brought up under a reaction in which the women had taken effective charge of affairs. Slowly the churches are turning again to the cultivation of fraternal life among the men. It is a pity that so long the church neglected the fraternal interest of its male members. Lodges have been formed of good men all over the country, especially in the Middle West, to satisfy the need for which the church offered nothing. No other method is more fruitful in developing the whole life of the church than attention to the needs of the men of the community, and in many places this attention has brought abundant fruit. The following are but a few of the churches so doing. May their number greatly increase.

Germantown United Brethren Church, Montgomery County

The outstanding feature of this church is its organization of 60 men who constitute the Brotherhood. These men assume the responsibility of directing and promoting the material interests of the church. All the money needed for church maintenance is raised by a committee of 16 men. Some committees have charge of the social activities; others assist the pastor in other ways.

Under the leadership of the pastor and the Brotherhood the church building was recently remodeled at an approximate cost of \$30,000. The church to-day has all the conveniences of the best equipped churches.

During the past three years \$26,500 has been raised among its members, most of whom are retired farmers, few of them living in the open country at present. The success of this church is largely due to the influence of the pastor who has proved himself an efficient organizer.



GERMANTOWN UNITED BRETHREN CHURCH

Dalton Presbyterian Church, Wayne County

In 1909 a Brotherhood was organized. Ever since that time the work of the men of this church has been prominent. When one of the members was ill with typhoid fever the Brotherhood put out his wheat and cut and husked his corn. They paid the doctor's bill for a



EATING WATERMELON AT THE DALTON PRESBYTERIAN
SUNDAY SCHOOL PICNIC

boy who had broken his leg. The men of the Brotherhood act as ushers at the church services. The decorating of the church for Children's Day was done by them. Last year the Brotherhood entertained the ladies of the church; both luncheon and program were furnished by the men.

In six years this Sunday School has increased in average attendance from 70 to 140. It now enrolls 200 members. There are 35 men in the Brotherhood. On Rally Day 76 men were present. The superintendent of the Sunday School is a wide-awake business man; the teacher of the Brotherhood is a successful district school teacher. Both superintendent and teachers are well equipped for their task.

This church has 214 members, 107 of whom have joined during the past six and a half years. In April, 1914, the centennial of its founding will be celebrated. Presbytery will meet in Dalton at that time. This village has 600 people living in it. There have been two Local Option Campaigns; both times the town and county voted dry. The men stand together for the most part on the question of temperance. Rev. J. V. Findlay is the pastor of this church.

Madison Presbyterian Church, Columbiana County

This church has been organized for almost three quarters of a century. It is situated in the open country about midway between Lisbon and East Liverpool.

The Brotherhood of this church has promoted a "Home-Coming Day" and a Country Life Institute. Mr. A. P. Sandals, State Secretary of Agriculture, and Rev. George W. Brown, Synodical Evangelist, had part in the Country Life Institute.

The pastor, Rev. Leard R. Wylie, as well as the membership of the church, take an active part in anything that will better the community. To this end they have identified themselves with the Grange nearby. But they always remember that the church is first, and they center their interests around it.



ANOTHER SCENE AT THE DALTON PRESBYTERIAN
SUNDAY SCHOOL PICNIC

X. SUITABLE BUILDINGS

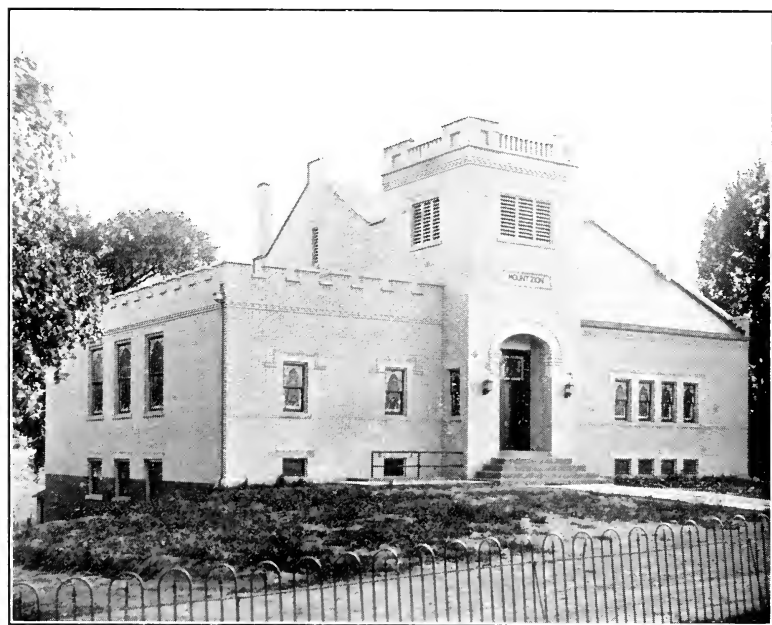
When the farmer comes into his own and is permitted to harvest the prosperity for which he has labored through nearly two generations of poverty, he will rebuild the country church. A few such instances are at hand, but their number is very small. A suitable building is as necessary to a growing church as a sound body is to a good and intelligent man. It is impossible to develop a good Sunday School, a warm and friendly social life, or even a sound financial system in

a one-room country church. A single cell cannot house an organization. So that the churches in Ohio which have built suitable structures in the country have a great advantage in facing the future.

Mt. Zion Reformed Church, Greene County

This is the best building and operating plant in the open country in Greene County. It is a white pressed brick building, erected in 1912, at a cost of \$13,500. It contains five rooms; dining room, kitchen, nursery, Sunday School room and auditorium. It has a strong Sunday School which supplements the work of the church. Twenty young men and women, with an average age of seventeen years joined the church from the Sunday School last year. One of the unique features of the church is a portico built out over the drive at the back of the building. Here under shelter the people can alight from their carriages in severe weather.

The church for the past hundred years, in spite of changing conditions, has not only held its own, but maintained a steady growth, having at present a membership of 154. Rev. J. F. Tapy is the pastor.



MT. ZION REFORMED CHURCH



BRISTOL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Bristol Presbyterian Church, Morgan County

This church congregation was long undecided whether to repair its old one-room structure or build a new one. Finally the latter course was decided upon and in 1912 a modern and satisfying church home was built and dedicated. The new building, which was erected at a cost of \$5,500, contains an auditorium, a room for the Session, another for social purposes, a kitchen and a furnace room. This is the best country church plant in Morgan County. It stands in the open country, seven miles from any village. There is a Grange near the church. Every year a Farmers' Institute has been held at the Grange; this year an Ohio State University Extension School will be held there. An awakening community spirit is manifest. Perhaps nothing has more naturally aided in this than the common sacrifice necessary to the building of the Bristol Church. The completion of this structure, so well equipped to become a social center, should mark a new era in the history of the church and community.

New Burlington Methodist Episcopal Church, Greene County

The Epworth League of the Methodist Episcopal Church of New Burlington conducts a lecture course each year, which has always been a financial success. The church recently bought an old two

story house in the village. The lower floor of this has been converted into a parlor, kitchen and dining room. All meetings other than religious are held in this building. The Masonic Lodge rents the upper part and this rental income maintains the expense of the building. Rev. H. Killender, New Burlington, Ohio, is pastor.

XI. MUSICAL CHURCH

Americans are not aesthetic. We are still a young and a raw people. Our community life, except in the great cities, offers little of beauty or of culture to its people, and very often the attempts at artistic or musical expression are crude and unsound in principle. The time will come when every country community, enriched with a profound religious feeling and educated in effectiveness, will have its own medium of happiness. The church here mentioned has a great distinction in its music. Would that every American community valued itself for two things: a product made by the hands of its citizens and an artistic expression in which it excelled. Neither of these distinctions of community life will ever be attained without the promoting and inspiration of a religious spirit.

Gomer Congregational Church, Allen County

This church is known throughout Northwestern Ohio for its fine music. Under the leadership of Mr. George W. Williams excellent congregational singing has been developed. Everybody has a book and everybody sings. The church renders a quality of music that is rarely heard outside of churches in large cities. At the Conference held last October, 1913, the choir, numbering between fifty and sixty voices, rendered eight anthems, four quartettes, double quartettes, duets and solos with no outside assistance. During the summer months people come from the city to hear and to enjoy the singing at Gomer Congregational Church.

Two years ago the large lecture room was opened to the Farmers' Institute. At first the proposal of such action aroused opposition, but the congregation soon came to the realization that their first duty

was to the community. The doors of the church were thrown open and everybody was invited to the Farmers' Institute. The same policy was pursued last year with encouraging results.

The church building is in excellent condition. A new slate roof was put on it, and a furnace and lighting plant were installed during the past summer. The entire building was painted and frescoed and concrete walks were arranged around it. These repairs required funds amounting to \$1,500, all of which were secured by the pastor, Rev. William Surdival in three days.

XII. AN EVANGELISTIC CHURCH

It is strange that among the Ohio rural ministers who were asked to interpret the success of their churches only one replied in terms of evangelism. Obviously the work of a pastor is the best evangelism. Undoubtedly in the story of all distinguished churches in rural Ohio evangelism has a large part. The personal work and the organization for gospel efficiency here described are included in many other churches and wrought into the texture of many of the stories in this list.

Alexandria Methodist Episcopal Church, Licking County

With the mottoes in mind "Discover, win and find a place for every natural leader," and "Arouse the few and the few will arouse the many," the pastor of the Alexandria Methodist Church secured united effort in winning the men of the community. At first he had only a handful of helpers, but they were willing, and soon through the pastor's guidance clearly saw the needs and possibilities of their church. Many of these men enlisted as personal workers in the revival campaign which added 158 new members. This revival was not the work of an evangelist, but directly due to the cooperative efforts of the pastor and his helpers. A Brotherhood with "The Glad Hand" as a motto was organized. The church now has 380 members, 124 of whom are men. Rev. Karl B. Alexander is the man to whom credit is due for the marked progress that has been made by this church.

XIII. AN AGRICULTURAL CHURCH

Every one of the churches in this story is a farmer's church; but some of them look away from the farm. Very often the effect of a country church or a country school is that it furnishes a ladder to get out of the country. All rural churches should dignify the life of the farmer and should teach the young the virtues of the fathers of the community. So far as a church has power to influence the community life it should interpret the life of those around about it, on the broad presumption that the sons of the farm wherever they go will have a religious reward in honoring and in understanding the life of their parents.

It is curious, however, that very few churches in Ohio are distinguished by what some have called "rural-mindedness." Probably more than one might so be found, but the church here described holds up the ideal of simplicity, homeliness and loyalty to the rural economy. Undoubtedly the life in this church tends, as an economist has insisted it should, "to make of Christian people better farmers."

Sonnenberg Mennonite Church, Wayne County

This growing church in the open country has 503 members, 498 of whom live in the country. These people not only have their names on the church roll, but always attend unless unavoidably prevented. The average Sunday morning congregation numbers 475. The Sonnenberg Mennonite Church has built up a stable community; as evidenced by the fact that 86 per cent of the farmers in the county are owners. The young people have charge of the evening service, which has an average attendance of 250. That the relation in this church between good farming and good religion attracts the men is shown by the fact that 18 of the 24 Sunday School teachers are men.

XIV. SUMMARY

Ohio is a representative state. The findings of the Ohio Rural Life Survey have an authority in every state in the Union, especially in those states having a common tradition and a population similar unto

that of Ohio. Certainly the findings in this Survey correspond in general showing to country churches throughout the United States. They may be summarized as follows: the country church is doing well where it has certain definite factors in its life. No other church is doing so well with so little artificial reinforcement. The minister in the country is the happiest man among his brethren, if his work possesses certain characteristics. They may be briefly described as follows:

First, the country church needs a resident minister.

Second, the country church needs a full development of the Protestant organization. It needs not so much any eccentric or peculiar treatment, as a normal development of the church. Country people need a good organization. No matter where they have it, the result is the same. Something to hold them together, to create a sound social life, to teach the principles of cooperation, mutual obedience and the subordination of one to another and to keep alive the idea of self-sacrifice in the interest of a larger whole and a greater purpose,—this is the great need of the country.

Third, in all parts of the country, as in Ohio, the ministry of the church to the whole community, whether symmetrically expanding upon all or definitely attacking a particular problem, is a factor in success. The ministers who serve in community churches boast of their work as no other ministers do. It may be that their pride is in the fraternal society of men; it may be that they boast of the work among boys or of the organizing of a library or reading room, of lighting the streets, the inception of a bank or other service institution. But in whatever way it comes, the church in the country that deals in wholes, and not in fractions; that ministers in a large way and not merely to individuals, is a happy and a great institution.

Fourth, everywhere, the church that “does things” is the successful church. We are not surprised if we find in this list churches which have distinction for the mere fact of having erected a new building. Nowadays doctrine makes little impression upon the mind of those “whose hearts God has touched.” But action and service and the accomplishing of fixed purposes, these things cheer the saints and challenge the sinners, so that even to have built a new church is a good thing.

Fifth, the eccentric or peculiar church does not make much impression upon the devout observer in the country, yet a few such churches with one peculiar line of distinction are worth noting. On



the whole, the great need of the country is a well-rounded, devout, Bible-teaching organization, in which regenerated men and women can find a home for their hearts, a machinery for the accomplishing of their ideals and a house in which their social and communal needs may be sheltered. The church, whatever it do, must be the body of Christ to its members.

