

RURAL CHRISTENDOM



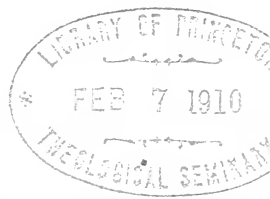
CHARLES ROADS

\$ 1000. PRIZE BOOK



BV 638 .R6 1909
Roads, Charles, 1855-
Rural Christendom

Green Fund Book No. 15



RURAL CHRISTENDOM

OR

THE PROBLEMS OF CHRISTIANIZING
COUNTRY COMMUNITIES

BY

CHARLES ROADS

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WORLD"; "ABNORMAL CHRISTIANS"; "BIBLE STUDIES
FOR TEACHER TRAINING"; "CHILD STUDY"; "SUN-
DAY-SCHOOL ORGANIZATION AND METHODS," ETC.

A PRIZE BOOK

PHILADELPHIA
AMERICAN SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION
1816 CHESTNUT STREET

1909

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This book enters a comparatively new field, and that it won the prize of one thousand dollars, out of many worthy and scholarly works in competition indicates its merit. The store of information and suggestion it contains on a question of foremost importance in our national life, hitherto scantily treated, will add interest to the comprehensive and scientific treatment of this new topic.

September, 1909.



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SECTION I.
THE RURAL SITUATION.



RURAL CHRISTENDOM.

CHAPTER I.

THE RURAL COMMUNITY IS GOOD GROUND FOR CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES.

IN the open farming region and in the quiet country hamlet are found, in all ages, the most fertile soil and genial atmosphere for Christian character and many gospel institutions. Without making claim now that the country is far more favorable to a conquest by Christian principles than the stirring city, we will indicate its inviting conditions. It is enough for its rich promise of development to show, that as irrigation and scientific agriculture have redeemed great wastes of land, so the element of spiritual fertility which is lacking, may be supplied with amazing results.

The country furnishes what the modern teacher calls "atmosphere" and what he regards as so essential to spiritual progress. Atmosphere in this pedagogic sense is much more than static environment. It is environment

filled with inspirations. And nowhere are the inspirations to profound and strenuous thought, to sincere worship, to larger visions so powerfully rich as where God seems almost visible in the grandeur of his daily miracles in field and sky and mountain.

This impressiveness of surroundings is felt even by the mature man from the city if he is at all tender of heart and soul, but when the child, whose open-eyed wonder rests first upon green fields, groves of majestic trees, and the unbroken expanse of blue sky, is given real enthusiasm for nature and some knowledge of God, he will have a mighty initial impulse in the spiritual. Unquestionably he also needs early in life the stir of city activities, the city's intense stimulation of every faculty, and its inspiring fellowships, and these are now accessible to ever larger sections of rural communities. But for noblest character which shall incarnate gospel principles, both religious and ethical, the first touch and the finishing touch may well come from the farm and the village.

Since the days of Paul and Luther, and even of Washington and Lincoln, many mighty forces of nature have been tamed and harnessed to serve man, yet now, as then, personal power is the supreme power. It was the thinking of the farmers of 1776, and their splendid characters and patriotic struggles that gave us a free country. It will be the sound thinking upon

great present day issues by rural dwellers who have time to think profoundly that will preserve our cherished institutions of church and state. The whole nation is concerned in the problems of the farm and of the village.

The scientific spirit of our day, inductive and experimental, tireless and painstaking, aspiring for absolute truth and enlisting armies of investigators, has created in thoughtful men a new attitude toward nature. Science has recognized the reign of law, and there are those who fear for the vision of God. But even the non-Christian masters of science freely admit the necessary existence of Unsearchable Power beyond law and surely the Christian believer recognizes here the heavenly Father.

Standing under the country evening sky, unobstructed by lofty buildings, undimmed by city electric brilliance, can he not see with astronomers like Herschell that the "undevout astronomer is mad"; or with Buffon that "Nature is the visible throne of Divine power. Created to be a spectator of the universe, the divine spark by which man is animated, renders him a participant in the divine mysteries. He sees and reads in the book of the world a reflection of the Divinity." Professor Hitchcock declares, "He who knows the most about science ought most powerfully to feel this religious influence. He ought to go forth from it among his fellow-men with radiant glory in his

face, like Moses from the holy mount." Still more sweepingly says Professor Harris, "God's revelation of himself is not limited to a few transcendent but isolated facts of the supernatural. Every lily and every sparrow, because it is the work of his hand reveals in itself the thought and the power of God." So Ruskin, profoundest of scholars and seers, tells us he felt a thrilling awe and wonderful joy in his studies of nature.

We have too long in easy imitation urged the Christian to rise from nature to nature's God. Spurgeon's thought is better, "The thing is to go from nature's God down to nature; to know God first in his Word and then see him in his works." It is after the morning communion with the heavenly Father that the hills and fields and sky are filled with him.

The growing "nature study" of the schools is extending into the country school, and is spurred on by great numbers of individual enthusiasts. It will inevitably lead to fine spiritual results as even in the rollicking verses of James Whitcomb Riley:

"And so I love clover—it seems like a part
Of the sacredest sorrows and joys of my heart
And wherever it blossoms, oh, there let me bow
And thank the good God as I'm thanking him now,
And I pray to him still for the strength when I die,
To go out in the clover and tell it good-bye,
And lovingly nestle my face in its bloom,
While my soul slips away in a breath of perfume."

The time has indeed come when the man whose eye is on the furrow he is plowing in the country, and the man who is gazing on his rake for gold in the city, shall both look upward and see their crown as the sons of God, their God transcendent but truly immanent in the land where his daily wonders are wrought on every foot of ground. When we see these things through Christ's eyes and the poets' eyes we shall measure more fully the advantages of the country for Christianizing influences.

1. Now when we are coming to appreciate more adequately the physical basis necessary to largest Christian life we see that it was in the country that the Washingtons and Lincolns, the Luthers, and still earlier Joseph and Moses and David grew the firmly knit bodies which served them in long-continued strains of grandest achievement. Their strenuous spirits mightily wrestling to express the life of God found powerful forms able to hold and to manifest them.

2. Think again of the nearness of God in nature moving the heart.

3. Only in the country is there the long winter of leisure for thought and meditation. There is, of course, much work on the farm in winter in feeding the stock, caring for and marketing of some crops, planning and erecting additional buildings, and so on, and there are men who "potter" about the barn and stable all day with a few acres of a farm, but to the farmer who wills to

have leisure, in most cases, all necessary work in winter is done in a few morning and evening hours, and he is in his comfortable study five to seven hours a day. The absence of city distractions, round of fashionable follies, and manifold temptations to idling and dissipations, is an incalculable wealth of opportunity.

The "old" farmer—in President Butterfield's happy classification* of "old farmer," "new farmer" and "mossback"—the "old farmer" who numbered ninety-six in every hundred of the people of America in 1800 "conquered the American continent." It was his clear and virile thinking that broke away from old despotisms and wrongs and established the wonderful ideals and institutions of the Republic. And, let it be often said, the future of America will largely rest upon the thinking of the "new farmer" who must ever be, if men are to have food to live, the largest single element of our population. What the farmer-citizen will finally conclude as to the issues of capital and labor, a rational system of finance, public franchises, and all else, will probably win.

The farm-house now has the long evening of civilization. Few farmer families think of retiring to bed at the "candle-light" of our grandmother's day. The candle itself is almost a relic. The development of the kerosene lamp to

* "Chapters in Rural Progress," p. 53.

its brilliancy of light and safety greatly lengthens life, and constitutes the new civilization which begins after the work day is closed. The Lincoln of to-day, with his passion for books, sits beside a Rochester lamp, with circular or double wick, air-fed, brilliant as electric light and far better than kings had a century ago. In the small towns and villages electric lights or acetylene gas are more common than in city homes. These hours for home and study during the day and the long evening give the country church its rich opportunity for extended Bible study plans. If wise, fresh, and practical methods are inaugurated and by earnest personal work their general adoption is secured, the winter months on the farm will grow most beautiful characters, Christian home life and powerful churches. What splendid reading and thinking some farmers are doing these days, and what delightful and stirring discussions of deep current questions by the well-informed parents and the bright children there! Family worship around an open Bible read and talked over before the tender and comprehensive prayer, and then the time for private communion with the heavenly Father.

4. The pre-eminence of the church in the country in the public eye is another vast gain for Christian life. The church steeple in the country is higher than any other building. It is not sunk in wells of brick and stone made by

office sky-scrapers, huge manufacturing plants, and gigantic department stores. It is first in real importance as a public building and not fourth or fifth. There is no newspaper tower like another Babel overshadowing it in physical loftiness or in influence; there is no factory whose smoke entirely obscures the church building; and there are no playhouses, clubhouses, or worse, that are more attractive in appearance and program to the people. Who can measure the advantage of this church pre-eminence?

5. Social conditions are freer in the country. They may be controlled by Christian influences. Old associations of the country home, the old hearthstone, the old oaken bucket at the well, the old apple trees, the old graveyard at the dear old church are ties of power. And the wide kinships of blood, the ideal friendships, and the abundant hospitality are there as nowhere else. There are not the social extremes of rich and very poor.

The rural community is good ground for the Christian life both in material and in environment. In the farm regions there are drawbacks in contrast with city conditions such as scattered church membership, but this difficulty is also in the downtown city church; and in the large village and in the town the church members are usually only a few minutes from the church. There is the lack of intense activity and city ideals, but in the city church these are

often outside. On the whole, discounting all that a just estimate requires, the rural districts, even of the sparsely settled farm community, offer very good ground for largest Christian effort. And the village and the town are still better,

CHAPTER II.

ACTUAL PRESENT RELATIONS OF CITY AND COUNTRY.

COMMUNITY life in America, city and rural, may be broadly divided into five distinct types. There are not simply two, city and farm life, as we usually classify them, but two different city types and three rural types of community.

1. The city of metropolitan size is itself one problem, so vast and perplexing, that the attention of Christian leaders has been upon it almost exclusively for a generation. The engulfing of the city in business, its whirl of social excesses, its overwhelming rush and crush of strenuous good and evil crowd and cramp the church from every side. It would seem that to save our greatest cities they must be stirred also by Christian forces outside of the church in active co-operation with aggressive forces inside the church. And all these forces have long been recruited from spiritual and active country congregations. The city problem itself is also a country problem, and the live and promising end of it is in the country.

2. The next type of community is the large city ranging from ten thousand to over one hundred thousand population. There are several hundred such in America. They still have large and attractive residential sections in proximity to business centers; they have not the mad haste of metropolitan activity; they have a more homogeneous population. This large city not metropolitan in character has, for Christian work, much of the great advantage of largest cities for intensely stimulating atmosphere of general enterprise, for large numbers of people easily accessible, and high ideals and general culture; and it has freer social relations and less of extremes of wealth and poverty. There too the church is still the most popular place of resort, the pastor still a prominent citizen, and Christian fellowship close and delightful. This is, on the whole, the most fertile field for the Christian worker to-day. It may yet be saved by its powerful churches reaching outward. In many ways it sheds a light upon rural problems by contrast of opportunities and suggestions of methods. But it is a city field in every respect.

There remain three types of community which are clearly rural. Alike in general limitations and conditions they are different in important particulars.

3. The open country of farming, mining or lumbering people is one type, and their small villages belong to the same class. Then comes

the town numbering from fifteen hundred up, with its greater conveniences of living, its denser population, some civic organization, and better schooling. In places remote from large cities we may include some towns of five thousand as having about the same general characteristics. Lastly we have the suburb or residential section near to a great city but not a part of its organic government, where rural conditions prevail, but with many new features to be considered.

The United States Census classifies as "city" a place having 8,000 people or over. In 1900 there were 550 such cities. But this line of 8,000 for a place does not strictly divide between city and country conditions, for there are cities above that population with rural characteristics in every respect, and many places below 8,000, some of 5,000 people with a city government, city activities, and society. Allowing for these exceptions it is probable that about thirty millions of American people live in purely city conditions.

But by far the larger number live in rural America, in ten thousand towns and villages, and in the open farming region. The total number of these country people is over 50,000,000. Outside of densely settled New England, New York and three other States, the rest of the country has fully three-fourths of its people amid rural conditions. Problems con-

cerning them are supremely important not only to them but to the nation and to the world.

It is of course true that cities in America and in the world have grown amazingly. And some rural sections have decreased in population by influx to the cities. But rural America as a whole has also grown to vast proportions and is growing more rapidly than ever. The United States Census figures show this astonishing growth of farm and village population by decades. The census defines as rural all people in cities less than 8,000 in population and the comparison is made on this basis:—

Population in Rural Districts in the United States.

1840.....	16,615,459
1850.....	20,294,290
1860.....	26,371,065
1870.....	30,486,496
1880.....	38,837,236
1890.....	44,349,747
1900.....	50,485,268
*1906.....	54,107,571

This crowding of new people is upon farms even more than into villages and hamlets. The number † of farms in 1880 was 4,008,907, in

* Census Bulletin 71. Latest estimated population by Census Bureau including interdecennial census by fourteen states.

† Census Bulletin 237—figures for 1900 include the small number in Alaska and Hawaii.

1890, 4,564,641 and in 1900, 5,739,657 growing much beyond rural population as a whole in the last decade.

In forty years the twenty-six millions of 1860 almost doubled, and in sixty years the country population increased more than threefold. The United States as a whole has yet about three out of every five of its people living on farms or in small towns.

4. The growth of cities itself necessitates enormous growth of farms and farm laborers to supply the cities with food. Already the pressure of increasing millions of people is upon food supply, and is alarmingly raising prices. This is sending other millions of people into the ever more profitable general and special lines of agriculture. The increase in annual value of farm products, 1890 to 1900, almost doubled that of the preceding decade, and for 1907 added 58 per cent. to 1900, (1890, \$2,460,107,454 and 1900, \$4,739,118,752, in 1907, \$7,412,000,000) *

5. Still more significant than the wonderful absolute multiplication of population in rural districts is the fact, shown by the last United States Census, that the drift city-ward is decreasing and that a decided return movement from city to country is under way. This long time congestion of city life by the crowding in of the ambitious boy and girl from the farm, the town and the village, has aroused great dis-

* Estimate of Secretary of Agriculture.

cussion. The city-ward movement is over a hundred years old, beginning in 1800 when 96 per cent. of the people were in the country and only four per cent. in the few cities of over 8000 people then in existence; the movement grew slowly until in 1850 urban people had 12½ per cent.; then it leaped rapidly as shown by decades to 16, 21, 22½, and in 1890 to 29 per cent. of the whole. But this promises to be the high water mark, for now the swing of population is reversing unmistakably, though great cities will continue to grow amazingly and smaller cities multiply. While there were 448 cities above 8000 in 1890 and 550 such cities in 1900, a gain of one hundred more, none the less is the city-to-country movement remarkable. In the decade 1880 to 1890 it was shown by the census that two-thirds of the increase of the people went to the cities, one-third to the country, but for the decade 1890 to 1900 the proportion was nearly the same for each. The exact figures are an increase of 6,374,000 for the country, and 6,736,000 for cities. From 1900 to 1906,* the increase for rural districts is 3,112,693, for cities over 8000 population, 3,466,927, showing that this movement to the country continues. Every thoughtful observer has noted the country-ward sweep, every city pastor of large and wealthy churches lamentably

* See Census Bulletin 71, the latest estimates of the U. S. Census Bureau of Population before the new census 1910.

knows of it, and every real estate dealer is trying to adjust rents and new houses to it.

6. This rural trend is sure to grow to larger proportions. The call of the country is ever louder and more alluring. The longing grows for the open field and the larger free environment for homes by leaps and bounds. Every consideration of economy and sentiment aids it. Parents believe they can train children better away from the crowded streets, under the trees, and in green fields. The hard-pressed, nerve-racked business man and the professional man of failing health sniff the country air with new vigor and inspiration, and are coming in colonies, by villages and towns built almost in a day. The love of flowers and birds attracts many, and the call of the fields and streams and woods is eagerly answered now that electric cars whirl from the city in all directions far out, and automobiles have come, and airships next, and what not for rapid intercommunication. This mingling of city life with the country must have larger discussion later, for it will extend farther away from cities, and into the open farming region where already beautiful mansions on large estates are common sights.

7. The rural districts are now strategic for Christianizing all America. There is where the forces of evil are weakest, unorganized, and unentrenched. The saloon is rapidly withdrawing from rural America, and resorts of evil for

gambling and lust never were known except in a certain kind of town. Moral and civic victories at the present time are won in rural sections, and in States with few large cities. The national well-being looks to country voters and country legislators for reform of all kinds, and there are the ever favorable battlefields. And for religious work the same amount of effort always produces many times the result in conversion and strengthening of the church which is possible in cities. The same expenditure of money will bring immensely larger returns for the Christian life. Country boys and girls crowd into the cities and it is easier to save them to Christ before they leave home than when in the maelstrom of city vices and sins. It is cheaper to prevent pollution of the living stream at its country springs than to filter it in the city. In the strong and attractive town or village church the future city dweller may be trained in character and for service. Every weak country church is also a menace to the city.

8. For its own sake rural America must be Christianized. It contains three-fifths of all the people, and is thus by far the larger field as compared with all the cities. It will be easier to save this three-fifths of the country than that two-fifths city America. The leverage for the whole nation is there at present, and the future swings that way. It is the pressing problem of to-morrow. In all the past the city was fed by

streams from the farm and the village, its great leaders for the most part were bred in the country, and its best people came from it. It will continue to be country-fed and country-replenished in the future, though some of the best young men and women under the greater enthusiasm for farming and its scientific development even now choose to remain there.

And it is now certain that some of the best people from the country to the city are returning to the country to live. There will thus be the daily freshening and purifying of city people by the country more and more, so that to save the city we must develop the country church to its finest and loftiest service, character and training.

This means that the city Christian must vitally interest himself in the country problem. He must energetically, as he knows so well how to do, throw himself into the rural church, help to finance its forward movements, and develop its utmost power. The uptown church needs larger organization for the kingdom of Christ, the downtown church must not be abandoned, but back of both of them is the country church which often actually sends into them more members than these churches win from their city fields. Do not these city churches owe to the country careful study of conditions, deepest sympathy, and support, and fervent prayers? Let this study of rural conditions by city Christian leaders be at first hand by going into the

country personally for it and patiently and fully investigating actual conditions. In no other way can deepest sympathy and intelligent co-operation be effected. For it is one thing to read about the sore needs of rural America in a city home, and quite another to study these needs under the trees of the farm and in the streets of the little village.

CHAPTER III.

THE OPEN FARMING COUNTRY AND THE SMALL VILLAGE.

AMERICAN farm homes are farther apart than any in the world, except possibly in some parts of Russia, and more isolated than any in history. In Oriental countries like Palestine, the farmers dwelt together in villages or walled towns and went out to their fields in the morning. Fields for pasturage were communal and free to all in many lands, and where the fields for tilling were allotted to individuals the farms were small. The families lived in the social advantages of the walled town so necessary for mutual protection from bands of robbers, or predatory kings and chieftains.

In the Middle Ages farming was done by feudal lords owning vast tracts and their bondmen lived in groups of houses or villages like the slaves on great southern plantations before 1860. In small countries like England, Ireland and Scotland the landlord nobility still hold title to immense estates given out in small tracts of

a few acres each to tenants, and where the farms are owned by individuals they are small patches compared with the two hundred to six hundred acres of the American farmer. The homestead of the great West contains 160 acres, but the purchase of neighbors' holdings doubles and quadruples many of these, and even in the older Eastern States and Middle West, except New England, two hundred to three hundred acre farms are almost the rule.

The American pioneer struck out with his family alone into the vast unbroken forest.* Making peace with the few Indians who roamed over what are now great States he cleared a few acres, staked out as much more as he could, and worked while neighbors came on following his example in subjugating the wilderness. Miles apart were these early settlers and they learned to live alone. The vast Commonwealths have thus filled up, but even now the population of the whole country, distributing that of cities with the rest, is only twenty-eight † to the square mile, while in France it is 187, in Germany 225, and in Holland 440. The intensive farming of France and Germany requires only a few acres to support a family, and villages and towns near each other crowd these countries.

Subtracting the population of cities and

* See Roosevelt's "Winning of the West."

† Census Bulletin 71. Estimates of Population for 1904 1905, 1906, page 17.

larger towns, say above 2,000, in the United States the actual farm populations on the land being cultivated may be estimated as probably less than fifteen to the square mile. This means only about three families of five each, on a great stretch of every 640 acres, a square mile. Even Russia has sixteen people, counting all her people, to the square mile and the farming there, for the most part, is not done by isolated single families scattered over large sections. America is probably unique in this condition of widely separated homes of the farmers. Before the new era of electric cars, rural free delivery of mails, and better roads, this isolation of farm life was becoming unendurable to multitudes. Between 1880 and 1890 the rural population of no less than seven States* actually declined fully 200,000 people though they gained 2,500,000 in their cities. These States are Maine, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York, Maryland, and Illinois. Other States showed a similar drift to the cities.

Farmers, unable to sell or rent farms, simply abandoned them. In New Hampshire alone the State Commissioner reported 1442 vacant or abandoned farms. In Vermont † good land was

* Dr. Josiah Strong in "New Era" gives these facts.

† Hon O. L. Martin, Vermont Com. of Agriculture, explains (letter June 21, 1909) that the Vermont abandoned farms were those earliest settled. The land was rough and later not profitable. "There are no first class farms in Vermont, abandoned." This is probably true of the cases in other States.

offered at one or two dollars an acre. In New York State in 1889 in Wayne County there were 400 empty houses, in one town fifty, in another thirty. In Michigan there were 7419 fewer farmers in 1890 than in 1880, though the population of the State increased over 400,000. In general out of a total of 25,746 townships in thirty-nine States and Territories, 10,063 townships * lost populations between 1880 and 1890. So widely distributed was this movement from country to cities.

This loneliness is most painful in farm regions five, ten to fifteen miles from any railroad. In towns and villages along railroad lines there is usually a stirring life and more frequent visits to cities and larger towns. The inland villages and cross-roads suffer in every phase of their life from the attractions of the cities.

Churches had become depleted, struggling, and some closed. In one New York village there were two abandoned Protestant churches, one active Roman Catholic church, and fourteen saloons. In another a former Presbyterian church is now used as a barn, the Baptist church is abandoned, and the two Methodist churches are almost extinct. These conditions were found *

* 1880 to 1890. Dr. Strong. But lest we should become pessimistic let us remember the large majority of townships which actually gained population. And the gain in number of farms 1890 to 1900 from 4,564, 641 to 5,739,657 a gain of 25 per cent. This, too, not by subdividing into smaller farms but chiefly by adding new farms for the average size of farms

in many States to a greater or less extent. In Maine there were ninety-five towns and plantations where no religious services of any sort were held, and even more than that number in Illinois without the Gospel.

With this deterioration of churches went every other good thing, and there is no wonder that eminent observers, like the Home Mission Secretaries of the Churches, the Evangelical Alliance leaders, Dr. Josiah Strong, and others, became pessimistic over the outlook. They argued very conclusively to themselves that this drift to the cities depleting the country would go on with accelerating force.

But it was not that the American loves farming less. He loves his fellow-men more. Relief has come from the economic side,* where the Church was helpless. New means of intercommunication, new and deeper scientific interest in farming itself, have revived the former fascination of the field, the plow and the orchard, and with human society assured, the churches will be reopened, good schools built, and farms reoccupied.

“Uncle Sam” has indeed been rich enough to give all who wanted it a farm,† and the eager-

also increased (1890 to 1900) from 136½ acres each to 146.6 acres each.

* See Chap. VII.

† The public lands still unappropriated and unreserved, that is, open to settlement and farming by the people, July 1, 1908,

ness of the people in rushing into any newly opened territory is proof of how deep is the significance of individual ownership. The great majority of farms* are operated by their owners, 3,713,371 farms out of 5,739,657; by share tenants, 1,273,366, cash tenants, 752,920. This sense of independence and prospect of a large future has been an incalculable civilizing force in the lonely regions of our great America. And the farm home has become better in many ways for it.

I. Thus it has remained for American farm homes to become the loneliest places in the civilized world. Yet so vast is our wonderful domain that with all the isolation there are nearly six millions of such scattered homes. More than one-third † of all work-people in the United States live in ones and twos on these farms, ten millions of farmers and helpers. In their villages near by there are of mechanics, merchants, and laborers nearly five million more.

For all of these people on the farm, or cross-roads, mining, lumbering, or fishing village, there is the absence of city temptations and ex-

are 754,886,286 acres. From 1878 to 1908 there were 88,945 entries or purchases, representing about that number of families for public lands alone.

* Census Bulletin 237, p. 6.

† U. S. Census Population. General Tables p. 7. Total number in all occupations 29,287,070, in agricultural pursuits, 10,438,219.

citements, but also the lack of city activities, inspirations, restraints and enforcement of law. And there are many evils peculiar to the country.

The farm boy and girl have no helpful associations except schoolmates in winter and the Sunday-school class for such as that reaches. Do we realize what it means that there are fully twenty-five millions of such lonely young people, now with minds better educated, hungry for books but whose reading is largely unsupplied and unguarded? Long stretches of days alone, uneventful days, when the bad novel the boy gets makes worse impressions than on city boys. His few companions with their total stock of a few cheap books pass to him the evil because the good does not occupy or preëempt the ground.

This unoccupied condition is the real peril of the farming district. Everything intellectual, moral and spiritual in the average sparsely settled community is largely unoccupied and undeveloped. And what evil comes is weeds, spontaneous growths of the sinful because the good is not cultivated diligently.

So time hangs heavily on the young man. Later in life he will go to the lodge one evening a week and to the grange occasionally, for there are few places that have not a "secret order" of some kind or an association or farmers' meeting occasionally. But there are six nights in every week and even Sunday night has, in many places, irregular services. What can the young man or

the wide-awake boy do with all these unoccupied nights? He will not in these days go to bed at "candle-light" and he may not, in every case, love books well enough to read and probably does not have books if he did love reading. The country schoolmaster and the pastor can tell pathetic tales of their unsuccessful efforts to induce many a plodding farmer to buy books, or to send his aspiring children to college. They succeed in some cases but fail often even to have the boy released from farm work to push his own way to an education.

The country church too often is planned for the tired men and women who want a minimum of church meetings and activities. The superabundant energies of the young people are scarcely touched. Even the Sunday meetings are more soothing to the overworked father than inspiring to youth. The preaching every two weeks gives little opportunity for extended ethical instruction and ideals of living. The religious needs of the people cannot be met by such infrequent discourses.

Thus the child's moral education and training is left largely to the country home. But the Christian home is usually the creation of a vigorous church and requires such a church to maintain it. The church spiritually weak has homes without family worship or religious education, and thus the young people of the farm

or little village are exposed to peculiarly strong temptations unprepared.

2. The actual moral conditions of many open country communities, allowing for some notable exceptions, are not the sweet and pure innocence which casual visitors glowingly describe. There are sights and circumstances which sorely try the virtue of young people and children. Animals, especially the large animals of the farm and village, are not secluded in their procreative times, but are in sight of the excitable imaginations and immature consciences of boys and girls. One Christian farmer in Maryland, among the few of thousands I have observed, was alive to this peril and in all his arrangements he was scrupulously careful to keep his children away from such scenes. He told of his extreme caution even with his son, then of full age, and that in home conversation the utmost purity was maintained. It was beautiful to see the result in the sweet refinement, modest womanhood and manliness of his children.

But this is sadly exceptional. Gross and amazing stupidity in this respect marks the conduct of many nominally Christian farmers. Their young children are early corrupted in their thoughts by these sights, and with so little besides to divert their minds the effect of these exciting suggestions is fearful in self-abuse and far worse. A recent discussion in a religious paper of these influences, in which pastors,

school-teachers, and Christian fathers participated, revealed shocking things.* It is a marvel that so many escape ruin, other influences fortunately coming from the church or school to save them, but the social morality in many rural districts is deplorable. The criminal courts of the county have long lists of these crimes, though only a few reach that light, and social customs are disgustingly free, and many fall.

One naturally hesitates to give facts of these vices. Any one can gather them in typical country districts remote from cities, but these very farmers who are so wickedly obtuse hotly deny that any evil results from their carelessness. They ought to inquire of country physicians, of whom many are intimate friends of the writer, and learn the truth. Young men after their conversion tell their pastors, sorrowfully, of customs from which their unwatchful parents did not guard them, though some of these parents themselves fell by these perils. In one village, not so bad as some, nearly a dozen of the prominent families began their homes in shame. The country schoolhouse and its surroundings exhibit the children's impure thoughts.

There is wicked carelessness in the conversation of older people. Matters concerning animals are freely discussed with the children listening and tempted to indecencies. The father thinks it all safe to talk to men and boys when

* Sunday School Times.

the women are not in hearing. But here the peril is greatest of all.

“Don't send my boy where your girl can't go,
For a boy's or a girl's sin is sin, you know,
And my baby boy's hands are as clean and white,
And his heart as pure as your girl's to-night.”

3. Foolish superstitions are not confined to the country. They linger long even in great cities. Few sky-scrapers or hotels have any “thirteen” rooms. One large building defied the superstition and the “thirteen” rooms on every floor remained vacant though scores of applicants came. One brave man occupied the only such room and saw the other rooms renumbered “12 A.” No room in such buildings is opened on Friday to begin business. So the city has no stones to cast at country superstitions for the thirteen and Friday notions are not only senseless but peculiar for dishonoring Christ. Friday, Good Friday, an unlucky day for the world! And the thirteenth at the table was Christ for he sat at the head after the twelve were there! Some farm superstitions have at least a show of probability in sense and reason. But all are destructive of real trust in God, and of wise reasoning and decision about important concerns of life. How demoralizing to real character it is to believe in the good luck of finding four-leaved clover, or horseshoes, or carrying a rabbit's foot or a horse-chestnut in the pocket;

how childish the man's or woman's mind frightened by the hoot of an owl or the howl of the dog. There are a great number of weather signs and superstitions just as unscientific and foolish, but still widely current. But think also of watching the phases of the moon in planting, and other astrological notions in deciding grave issues of life; what direful things will happen because they saw the new moon over the wrong shoulder. There is belief in fate and luck, in fortune-tellers, and a lingering dread of repulsive old hags, who are not always unwilling to be feared as witches.

All these are notions which are impossible to reason away because they were never reasoned there, but which paralyze higher character, all real education and moral progress.

Scientific lectures of Agricultural Departments of States and of the National Government discoursing of better seed and analysis of soils run against these ancient notions in disgust. Sunday-school teachers who are lifting nobler ideals find them serious obstacles. They are not amusing but fearful and subtle inventions of the evil one, and some like the "Friday" terror an amazing dishonor to Christ. Is it not astonishing that these bald and silly heathenisms still persist? And still more surprising that the Church does not see how destructive of true religion they are! After all our progress in culture and rational Christianity that such super-

stitious fears should still be an obstacle to Christian work everywhere.

4. The loneliness of the farm and the few contacts with strangers make the child there afraid of new people. He shrinks from them painfully, speaks little and embarrassingly, and misses the development of gifts of expression. This serious drawback is not overcome by church and school in many cases. Children are crammed with knowledge from their studies but cannot use it effectively, and doubtless many a promising character is driven back to obscurity. This is another sadly undeveloped asset of country Christianity.

There are no great happenings in country life. The round of daily duties becomes monotonous and with no enthusiasms of nobler pursuits there comes carelessness of little things. Slovenliness of person and of thinking results, and much more, but that so often God has some splendid mother here and there or some earnest worker who saves a few individuals from this drifting, drifting of every sort.

5. Infidel arguments against the Bible and against religious convictions reach the awakening country boy with a strange fascination. Their boldness and assurance excite admiration and their freshness is a delightful sensation,*

* Sunday-School Missionary, July, 1909, pp. 5, 6. A Sunday-school missionary in Washington State writes, "On one of my trips I found a mother and quite a number of children

where so few things out of the humdrum are said or done. The old home library still contains the ancient book of Thomas Paine and the well-thumbed lectures of Ingersoll. There are no replies at hand to these startling and apparently conclusive arguments, as the youthful thinker regards them, for if he ventures to ask the pastor concerning them he receives usually a severe general rebuke for reading such books and in rarest cases only a patient guidance back to the truth. The plodding and careworn father and mother sometimes are still such thinkers as inspire the boy to bring his questionings and doubts to them, and among the multitudes lost to faith a few are saved. But in these cases of doubts from skeptical books, as in everything else pertaining to helpful religious instruction and training in the country, little or no individual work is being done where it might be done most thoroughly. When these country boys and girls come to cities they are rudely jostled out of their doubts in many cases by the discovery

at home near dinner-time. She said she was in favor of my work but her husband was opposed to religious things. She however invited me to stay and I found him a pleasant speaking man. At the meal he said, 'We don't give thanks to a mythical being here, we thank the hands who provided it.' The children listened eagerly to the conversation. One little boy, eight years old, spoke up, 'Our God is nature!'" To another he suggested prayer, but that man said, "O we don't have such nonsense, I have studied the Bible thoroughly and find there is nothing in that."

that advanced thought has long ago buried Paine and Ingersoll into oblivion. But the childhood faith is also gone. The rural church and home should be specially alert to meet this peril in an environment so seriously stimulating its growth.

6. It is inspiring to find rural communities in which a strong church has created a new and refined condition of things reaching homes, social customs, and general life. We know such splendid churches which are a wonder of efficiency. Think of a building seating six hundred people in an open country with scarcely a house in sight, a building in attractive setting and modern appliances, and on Sunday morning processions of carriages from all directions fill the ample churchyard and the people crowd the church. A Sunday-school with modern appliances, graded lessons, trained teachers, precedes the general service and its fine singing, deep earnestness, and excellent results stir every heart. There are many such churches in purely farming districts.

The supreme opportunity of the church in these places is shown by the fact that the church determines its character, moral, social and intellectual. For the church is the sum of all kinds of helpful influences there. Just as the father in the home formerly was civil ruler, priest, teacher, physician, as well as parent, and when the Fifth Commandment enjoins honor to

him it includes honoring all these, so in the sparsely settled country is the church social center, intellectual club, entertainment and religious guide in one.

There are other churches which show great possibilities half developed and are doing much for the Kingdom of Christ. But they are slow to appreciate the value of modern organization of their forces. And the average country church is yet in a miserable condition. Slower than the slowest ox-team, long ago discarded in all but a few sections, with slip-shod organization, no financial system, no interest in the Sunday-school, and holding no service at all in the slightest rain or threatening cloud. Every possibility of good in the people and in the community undeveloped, this country church is a burden to its officials and still a large proportion of the whole. Men well acquainted with the country churches of great States report that they do not know of any that are aggressive. Some of these churches are in a combination or group miles apart with services every fortnight or once in three weeks if the weather is fair. They are financially in chaos and raise so little money that they are limited to such scanty pastoral care. A few such churches have the entire time of a pastor but he gives one service a week, no prayer meeting, no Sunday-school in winter, and what shall be thought of such a man?

7. Petty crimes of violence, thieving, and gross

drunkenness where they prevail are due to the absence of law enforcement.* The saloon, fortunately, is driven out of farming regions altogether in many States, and is rapidly going out of others, but where it still exists it is in its worst form. There country dances, wild and demoralizing, add to current evils.

It is a misfortune also that the settled conditions in farm life leave so little to develop courage or bold initiative. In the early pioneer times the hunting of wild animals, the fearful Indian wars, and other perils exercised splendid courage. What can be done in the humdrum of the present day to compensate for this loss of stimulus to nobler character?

On the other hand the introduction of much machinery on the farm has given a striking intellectual quickening. Work with whirring wheels, the puffing and scream of a steam engine, is always fascinating to men and boys and a more intense atmosphere of activity comes with the new and better mower and reaper, the steam thresher, the latest planter, and numerous other machines like incubators, cream separators, and other appliances.

8. The country store is still a unique civiliz-

* "Intemperance is largely the result of the barrenness of farm life, particularly of the lot of the hired man"—Report of U. S. Commission on Country Life, p. 44. The same monotony reacts toward other excesses of vice and crime when young and vigorous life is starving for sensations or activities.

ing or a demoralizing social center, and these stores range all the way from a dirty, low-ceilinged, shabbily-kept little shop, often with a liquor attachment, to the ambitious country department store with attractions copied from the city. The store is often also the Post-office, unless rural free delivery has come, and then its power is increased. All the local characters are there sitting on the counter or huddling about the stove, the news of all the country round is gathered and discussed, notices of sales and church festivals are posted and read over and over. Here is an opportunity which some earnest men who are proprietors have used helpfully for good.

9. Farm homes vary as widely as do churches and stores. There are refined Christian fathers and mothers who stock their shelves with books and magazines, turn their best room into a mechanic's shop with all kinds of tools for the boys, have a piano or organ, excellent pictures, bright games, and every possible attraction for happy children growing into beautiful character. One would think that every American parent would recognize that the absence of ordinary town and city attractions really enjoined upon them the duty of making their homes compensate childhood for such a loss, but there are houses, not homes, whose wholly unadorned, rudely furnished rooms are hardly as comfortable as some stables for the blooded stock. As Cæsar

said of Herod the Great, "One would better be Herod's hog than his wife, for as a nominal Jew he would not kill a hog," so one would fare better from some sodden, plodding, stingy farmer as his horse than as his child.

10. This preliminary survey, however, should emphasize and re-emphasize the unoccupied religious condition of the open country rather than any condition of settled evils. There are rank weeds growing but it is because the soil is not full of good seed. There is no reason for discouragement, nor for discounting the value of the country as the field for producing finest character and Christian leaders when it is wisely worked. It is a soil which though hardened by some evils allowed to troop over it, has yet few of the throngs of evils of the city; though it is not deepened by meditation and prayer as it may be, is by no means made shallow by petty whims of appetite and fashion; it is still simple, natural, genuine for the most part; and it is unoccupied and free from crowding of thorns of wild greed, passion, revelries and pleasures.

It is in the green and not in the sere and yellow leaf as so much of city life has become. It is not surfeited with rounds of entertainments or attempts at them, with intellectual feasts, and then left with appetites for all simple and good things gone. In the country there is yet hunger for the true and the pure in simple adornment.

Much light on all country conditions is thrown

by former President Roosevelt's Commission on Country Life, which made its report to him in Feb., 1909.* This able body of experts in Agriculture and Economics held hearings in about thirty States and received one hundred and twenty-five thousand answers to a series of questions about rural life, and a large volume of information by letters and special reports. They report that the level of country well-being is higher than ever before; that country population is increasing in wealth and multiplying the conveniences of living.

The Commission gives expression to their wishes and needs as the farmers voice them, and everywhere emphasis is laid upon the need of good roads; almost every part of the country is awaking to this as the first need. Equal emphasis is laid upon the need of more effective schools and a training in them for the farm rather than away from it. They point to the immediate necessity of fundamental changes. Then they want the extension of rural free delivery of mails, of parcels post, and wherever they have discussed it of postal savings banks. Local commercial organizations for buying and selling by the farmers themselves are being widely organized.

The Commission earnestly urges more attention to health and sanitation. The country has not organized to prevent typhoid fever and other

* United States Senate Document 705 contains the Report of the National Commission on Country Life.

diseases. There is great difficulty also about farm labor, difficulty in acquiring ownership of farm lands, and unsatisfactory systems of tenantry.

“In general the country needs Communication, Education, Organization.” For moral and spiritual work, also, the country is yet virgin soil. There are better equipped pastors and teachers willing to go and spend their lives in country pastorates, and with the splendid future coming to rural districts it is certain that still more capable men will enter these fields. Let us remember Christ’s own wonderful work in country places and all the inspiring aspects of it as a Christian opportunity.

II. Beyond these more thickly settled rural communities there are yet vast stretches of country so sparsely inhabited that even the smallest beginning of church organization is thought impracticable. It is difficult to realize that there are tens of thousands of these farm homes which are miles apart and only the cross-roads country store and blacksmith shop with an occasional tavern are in closer proximity, being the only groups of houses in whole counties or large sections of counties in many States. Here the Sunday-school missionary has accomplished his great work gathering the few children and parents into schools for Bible instruction. They have become in many cases centers of religious awakening and moral power. The American Sunday-school Union with about 250 such missionaries

at work has penetrated into the farthest pioneer regions, and the Presbyterian Church, the Baptists, the Congregationalists, the Methodists, and other denominations are organizing in these strictly farm regions thousands of little Sunday-schools, the only religious service for miles for these lonely homes. Probably 25,000 to 30,000 such farming regions are still to be reached by religious effort almost wholly in the form of Sunday-schools.

We can only partially imagine how these Sunday-schools are welcomed by the isolated pioneer family. In many of them the parents came from the older States and had enjoyed the privileges of church life from childhood. Now for twenty years in some cases, as the writer knows from personal acquaintance with these regions, they have not heard a sermon preached nor participated in a religious meeting! Can you see that little group of ten or at most twenty, assembled after many miles of travel, and calling themselves a Sunday-school with all the officers regularly chosen, singing the sweet old hymns of former years, engaging together in prayer, Bible reading and study? But you cannot see the thrilling memories awakened in those hearts nor the great joy of the humble service.

Many of these Sunday-schools will continue for a generation—one (a Union school) has existed in Pennsylvania for over seventy-five years—but some, by the boom of the neighborhood

bringing more people, will mature into churches, and in the same community several churches. There is rich opportunity for Christian organization but it must have regard to the peculiar obstacles and difficulties of the rural situation, the unique advantages for spiritual work it affords, the creation of Christian homes and the civic spirit, and then co-operate with them. Our problem is how to achieve such organization and results, but it is a problem largely on the way to solution by notably successful sections of American country life.

CHAPTER IV.

THE TOWN PROBLEM.

THE town* with clearly defined rural conditions contains probably from five hundred to five thousand people. Some larger towns or small cities remote from the influence of a metropolis or great city maintain country characteristics up to ten or fifteen thousand people and even beyond.

The United States Census marks off places as cities at 8,000 population and over, but some States like Massachusetts and Ohio wisely incorporate with city charter at a 5,000 minimum, and below that in Ohio. These small cities, however, are no less rural communities in every respect.

We will do well to call a place rural at five thousand down and allow for the few exceptions above that number. There are probably nearly ten thousand such towns in America containing

* Throughout this book we use the word "town" as signifying such a collection of houses whether incorporated as village or city, or unincorporated. In some States the word "town" is popularly used to designate a township which is a subdivision of a county. It seems better uniformly to call that subdivision of county a township, the hamlet a town.

twelve millions of people. If these towns can be made powerful centers of Christianizing influences they will go far toward curing our national ills. These towns send their best brains into the cities and if they always sent mature Christian characters what a spiritual and moral quickening would come to the outworn, prematurely decaying life of great cities! The work of pastors and Christian teachers in the town may often be discouraging, but probably it is the farthest reaching in the world to-day.

The town as a field for Christian effort has undoubtedly many perplexing difficulties. We will not underestimate them in our survey now, though, as might be expected, Christian workers there often exaggerate them and are unduly discouraged.

1. The temptations to social frivolities are among the chief obstacles to Christian work in the town. The lack of exacting business activities and of great intellectual movements and associations on the one hand, and the always struggling church become burdensome and unattractive, leaves a free field for social leaders: and they exhibit a diligence worthy of the best cause. All through the Fall and Winter there are rounds of euchre parties, whist parties, receptions, dances, and family entertainments. These are topics of unending small talk and engender the demoralizing gossip, jealousies, envies and heart-burnings always following social dissipa-

tion. The grip of these petty pleasures upon the popular mind is too strong for announcement of revival meetings to bring many outsiders, and even church members have the parties during the meetings; lectures of the best sort for culture and inspiration are deserted; even the church festival is leading a precarious existence, and movements for the young people's better activities seem hopeless.

Ordinary church work which simply preaches regulation sermons on Sunday, holds an old time Sunday-school, and a dreary mid-week prayer-meeting is unable to cope with the social swirl. Announcing revival meetings formerly would set the town astir and bring the crowds, but one can go to many now and not find an unsaved person present. And unless the meetings have been given special preparation, unusually good singing provided, and supported by a systematic personal work and with fine advertising, the "parties" will have more people than the meetings. But there are modern churches in some of these towns which have learned how to capture even the social forces.

2. An almost paralyzing difficulty is the removal to cities of the best young men and some of the best young women of town churches. The pastor may train some fine leaders but about the time they become helpful, the call of the city is irresistible. They go and no man quite as able or popular now remains. What can be

done? What is the use? Well, it should be comforting to the pastor, for love of the Kingdom of Christ far larger than any church, to know that he has sent splendid reënforcement to the struggling city church, and before he leaves the young man he should see to placing him in the largest opportunity in the city. This pastor can follow him by letter, if not by visit, to a brother pastor and secure the best introduction to church work for him. In the final award there will doubtless come rich rewards to many an unknown country pastor for the splendid achievements of some great city churches. So did that wonderful little Sunday-school in Connecticut, never more than fifty enrollment, whose superintendent, Henry P. Haven, it was, that Dr. Trumbull called the "Model Superintendent," send to the world more than forty notable College Presidents, missionaries, pastors and Christian laymen of national prominence; so have the very flower of American men of letters, of Christian statesmen, reformers, and Church leaders been trained in the small town.

But the pastor may discover others to train and send forth. That same small town holds probably a score of young boys of equally great promise.

3. Then there is the lack of higher ideals of life which with all its sins and follies the city holds, and the lack of city inspirations to activity. These are difficulties which too often are

chronic in the Church itself. The leaders have lost lofty standards and intense life in the Church if they ever had them. They have lost the first essentials to forward movements.

4. The general decadence of many American towns is a terrible fact. They are dying at the top, in nobler morals, in Church influence, in potent public sentiment and examples of aggressively good men and women. The laxity of law enforcement against vices and petty crimes results in weakening public moral sentiment. It springs from flabby public character and it reacts to render it worse. There is consequently a deplorable amount of social immorality almost open and unrebuked. The "kept woman" is well known and the man who supports her better than his lawful wife, though he yet lives with the latter, is readily pointed out, for there are several of his beastly tribe in many a town. These men are not socially ostracized and they freely talk about their "woman," as in an instance which occurred while this page was being written. In one town the chief citizen in authority was known as such a social leper but elected and re-elected to his office. Both these towns are in an older State and have fairly good churches but only doing humdrum work. In many towns there are well-known married women who receive other men, and one church had a vile woman who gave socials and put corrupting books into young people's hands. These things are pub-

lic gossip but the church seldom has moral force enough to expel these people or even seriously to disturb them in their sins. There is very little indignation against them.

At times these evils break out in a hideous murder. But still the parents are very lax in guarding their daughters in these towns. At the railroad station when the trains arrive and at village corners a wild set of girls from fourteen to twenty years of age are a common sight. Late at night they are still roaming the streets and young men take liberties with them that are rude and demoralizing. A pious priest hotly exhorted his people on the subject, "You will not go to bed without making sure that your cow is in the stall but your daughters are in the streets until midnight while you sleep unconcernedly." But there was no improvement even after such a sermon.

5. The destruction of the former small industries of many thriving towns by great "trusts" is a serious loss in far more than its financial crippling. It has driven out the intelligent mechanic, who is usually there the best man in the local church. Other factories, fortunately, are coming, like canning, silk manufactories, shirts, box and basket making, and minor articles. These require some skilled labor but do not fill the place of the wood-working and iron-working shops closed. And these new factories employ girls and women and bring the perils of

child labor. Yet this may be guarded, and the great advantage which the city stir of activity gives, more than compensates for the new difficulties of the situation. In New England the factory has brought the French family from Canada with its religion, and other foreign races and these present special problems. But all this is better than the dry rot of the town deserted by mechanics and men of ability. Christian citizens for every moral and economic reason should encourage industries and then cultivate a public sentiment that will keep them morally clean.

6. Another serious difficulty in Christian work in the town is the crowding of weak churches and church organizations. The larger population now more accessible even of the small town, has tempted denomination after denomination to build a church. And all are weak, and this is what makes this crowding a calamity. Not half the town is reached by all the churches and they struggle with debts and financial chaos, resorting to humiliating begging and demoralizing enterprises. The pastors are underpaid and for months unpaid. Their self-respect is weakened and their influence and spirit broken. The very mention of the church becomes painful and grievously burdensome. Bishop Cranston of the Methodist Episcopal Church tells of a village in the West of about eight hundred people with thirteen churches! A woman was converted in one of the churches there, and the good pastor

said in his hearty way of congratulating her, "Now, Mrs. S., you are happily a Christian and your first duty is to join one of the churches in this town. We shall be glad to welcome you to the fellowship of the church in which you found Christ but I would not unduly urge you to join. You shall be free to go into the church of your choice and conscientious convictions." Between the joyful tears on her face the good woman replied, "The church which I want to join is not numbered among the churches of this town."

This is an extreme crowding but it is easy to find many towns of one thousand people in which there are five churches. In a town of less than two thousand, of which the writer knows intimately, there were six churches and an actual enumeration by all the pastors showed less than six hundred members in all of them, and about six hundred and fifty in all the Sunday-schools, leaving about fourteen hundred unreached even by Christmas time enrollment.

The crowding and the neglect go together. The narrowly circumscribed pastor has a horror of being called a proselyter, and the "world" has the largest number, visited by no church official nor any organized effort. The Federation of the Churches of Christ in America, a newly organized and officially representative body of all denominations, is now courageously facing this condition of things so hurtful to the Kingdom of Christ, especially when the newer states have so

many towns with no church at all. There is hope for the pastor with no elbow room in his tiny parish.

These difficulties summed up are formidable but by no means unconquerable. Many instances of better towns show the way out.

Let us turn to the bright side and measure the advantages for Christian work in the town.

1. The town has the advantage of some civic organization of government. In this is a great gain over the cross-roads village and farm region. There is some law enforcement against crimes and a somewhat higher standard of morality. There is protection from fire and petty thieving. But towns should develop their local government more effectively so that a policeman is within call day or night, rowdyism on the streets impossible, and real protection given against burglars and personal assault.

2. The larger accessible population gives the greater opportunity. The members of town churches are nearer to their houses of worship than is possible even in cities, and good roads open the way for a larger number of meetings and closer fellowship. The town church has the small territory, all the forces at hand, and may cultivate intensively and richly.

3. Better schools and some public libraries bring larger foundations for Christian work. Every increase of general intelligence clears away some obstacles and should stir the church

to meet it with broader plans, better services, and richer helpfulness in every way.

4. Better homes exist than the farm-houses, and there is higher culture and refinement. These invite plans for Christian hospitality, Associations like the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle, literary and debating clubs, and elevating social gatherings.

5. The peculiar temptations of the farm due to loneliness and exciting sights are not in the town and the great temptations of the city are unknown. What a field for aggressive plowing and sowing and cultivating in Christ's name!

We may now fairly balance advantages and difficulties in the town, and justly realize the great encouragement that remains. But there must be the modern spirit for adequate organization, bold ventures, and self-sacrificing efforts. We cannot win with stage coaches, tallow candles, and ox teams in church movements when all business goes by steam, electricity, and soon by flying machines.

Usually the best place to begin the new life of the town is in repairing, modernizing, and beautifying the church building, or in wisely erecting a fine new one.* If this is financially impossible for the time, there is still much physical renovating possible at trifling expense and gratuitous labor usually to be had in a town.

* See Section III. for many instances and further suggestions for the country church.

But too much dependence may be placed upon the attractive power of a new building. It must be simply the inauguration of a new attractiveness of spiritual, intellectual, moral, and social service for all the people. In many a magnificent structure lies a dead church, and a grand tomb soon ceases to draw living men. But both the beautiful temple and the still more beautiful spiritual organization may go together in ever widening power.

CHAPTER V.

TOWNS AND VILLAGES OF SPECIAL CHARACTER.

THE typical country town* is modified in some cases by special features, better or worse, than the ordinary. These features present new conditions which the people of these towns should clearly differentiate, though in general characteristics these special towns are very similar to all others we have described. Let us not fall into the easy snare of thinking any particular field strangely peculiar in its difficulties.

The county seat, the factory town, the railroad town, the mining town, the fishing or sailor village, and the college or seminary town are the special types we may find in large numbers in the aggregate throughout America.

The likenesses of towns generally are greater and more numerous than the differences. And it is a wise philosophy which begins by studying points of similarity whether we seek to measure men or things. All men are alike in many par-

* See note, Chap. IV. By "town" we mean the hamlet or village but larger in size, not the township.

ticulars. Even so angular and peculiar a character as Abraham Lincoln is like millions in being of Anglo-Saxon descent, in being a true American, a Westerner, a Christian politician, lawyer, and patriot, a home educated man. Even in his supposed eccentricities of loving a humorous story, of tender-heartedness, keen wit in repartee, he is one of multitudes. We can best understand him in his individuality after we see the many things in which he was one of a large type. So the factory town or the college town and the others have the same simplicity of life, the greater prominence of the church as a social center, the lack of city intensity and strenuousness of activity, and even in college towns the lack of some of the high ideals which compensate in cities for so much that is disheartening. College towns, however, stand in the best class of fields for aggressive Christian work.

The perplexities of the ordinary town problem are also here. The vices and sins, the flow of gossip, the weakness of church influence, and the other limitations we have mentioned are in these towns also. Let us see, then, what is specially of importance to provide for in Christianizing.

1. The county seat town in the larger states is usually a busy center of population. Where the saloon still reigns, criminal court is frequently convened and thither flock the politicians, the criminal classes, and the bad women, several

times a year for a week or two. There is an atmosphere of sensational life constantly felt and a stimulated business activity. But the church there may share in this intenser life unless the pastor yields to the desire of some of his men to be free during court sessions from church meetings to pursue gain unhindered. It is really the church's opportunity as many fine pastors have shown. The sensational stir is better than steady decadence or deadening slowness. If the churches in these county seats were aggressive and met the visitors with attractive religious services, open church, and personal work as business houses meet them with newly-decorated stores, new goods, and specially drawing bargains, the churches would accomplish splendid results from what are often regarded as unfavorable conditions.

2. The small factory town in many sections, except New England, still has an almost solid American or American-born population.* The factory is often under the wise management of a conscientious employer whose regulations and oversight prevent vice and provide helpful environment. The stir of machinery is a stimulus to young and old, and where the saloon has gone, some of these manufacturing towns and villages are ideal fields for best Christian work. In

* This is changed in cities. The factory village or hamlet is also receiving some immigrants but the proportion is yet small.

many instances too, a vigorous church is ready for the opportunity at least in part. But it is well known that in other factory towns the conditions are especially bad because of lax or even wicked management of the establishment, because of the saloon, loose home restraints, and the unclean streets at night. Yet here the church could triumph if vigorously led and organized. Good Christians as citizens could reform the town and then the church might follow with a mighty revival. The very magnitude of the obstacles should concentrate spiritual forces and the wickedness of the people stimulate every effort to save them.

Careful students* of our changing conditions are reasoning that factories will return in large numbers to the small city, the town and hamlet. The rents and rapidly growing value of the larger city lots enormously increase expenses in these cities for all factory purposes, while the better sanitary conditions and more modern buildings possible in towns, the somewhat lower wages paid, and the freedom from dominating labor unions have attracted many capitalists to the town. It is common observation that in the older states these towns are recently crowding with many kinds of manufacturing plants large and small. It seems plausible that this trend will grow in a self-regulating way to develop many towns moderately or to a size still retaining

* Wilbert L. Anderson in "The Country Town."

the favorable conditions, instead of congesting a few to become cities. The rural factory town, therefore, will become a large element in the country situation for the Christian leader and moral reformer to consider. It is fortunate that state laws on factory inspection are becoming more effective and practical; that child labor bids fair to be under wiser and more humane regulations in the near future, because of the agitation upon that subject and the tender national conscience upon it being developed; and that the "welfare" movement among capitalists themselves showing its financial value as well as the moral benefits of large interest in the employees' well-being, insures better conditions in these town industries. The growing factory town will be a large expansion of field to many struggling churches, solving in many cases the problem of overcrowding towns with too many churches, and will stimulate all the activities of many such places long in decadent condition.

3. The railroad town is another well-known type but it has been steadily improving in moral character under various general movements. The Young Men's Christian Associations for railroad men have everywhere brought many railroaders to Christ and wisely provided for their leisure, as well as strengthened their hands in personal work for their fellows; Industrial Brotherhoods among them, like the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, of Railroad Conductors, and of

other classes of employees, have been led by earnest Christians, like the late P. M. Arthur, as Executives and have notably succeeded in elevating the moral character of the men; the stricter regulations of the Railroad companies concerning drink and immorality have had their effect. The churches in which these men, whose daily life is so full of peril and hardship, whose work requires so steady nerve and quick initiative and endurance, are among the leading members, are the best of country churches. They are generous in giving, trained by their work to be prompt and thorough, and living in constant danger, often become men of simple trust in God. They are unusually good material out of which to build a powerful church. On the other hand their Sunday work takes them away from the church when most needed and renders their work in the services uncertain. And there are still large numbers of railroaders unreached by gospel influences and whose love of excitement tempts them to excesses of vice, so that railroad towns are often both commendable for church activity and fearfully bad in immoralities. Sabbath desecration is specially demoralizing in the railroad town.

4. The mining town now has a large admixture of immigrants from Southeastern Europe, the Slavs, Hungarians, Bohemians, Poles, and Lithuanians. In one Pennsylvania mining town the Lithuanians rule. They elected the Mayor, the majority of the City Councils, and have a

police force of their own people. But they are no worse, probably better, than former government there. In another town where only English and German were spoken formerly it is said that a man counted thirty different languages spoken at the railroad station one day. The Penna. Bible Society requires Bibles in seventy languages and dialects to supply these regions. The small mining villages or "patches" are almost solidly of these people in some sections and are being considered important fields by Home Mission workers. Here earnest Christians are feeling their responsibility, learning these languages in a few splendid cases, and working hand to hand with them. It would mean a new and wonderful life for the local churches to plan for their people to undertake such personal mission work. There are other mining regions where a large number are yet Americans, in many yet a predominating American population, or the descendants of Irish, English, Welsh, and Germans, all now English speaking. The mining town is above all things excitable. It is usually rife with drunkenness though not so bad in social vices as some other towns. Churches are better than in most towns of their size and many of them doing excellent spiritual work when run intensely, for the people must have exciting activity all the time. There is no better place for an "open church, never closed" with broadened activities. The people are on the streets every night and the "never

closed" church has a wonderful opportunity. With a spiritual center of power and all other work co-ordinated to it, the church in a mining town would have crowds and a continuous ingathering.

5. The fishing village or town of the men of the sea has its peculiar difficulties, hard to understand by people who have never lived there. There are many idle days when no boat can go out to fish and no place has then such absolute idleness. The men and boys lounge and sleep all day. The uncertainty of returns from their work is a financial confusion. Sometimes they receive large money compensation and at other times for considerable periods next to nothing, and this leads to swinging from extravagance to pinching need. It makes it risky to plan for the church or the home. Their work, however, develops courage and boldness, patience and sympathy in losses and sufferings of others. We know some churches of spiritual power in fishing and oyster towns, and others as dead as the lazily flapping sail on the boat in midsummer calm. Christ found in fishermen like John, James, and Peter apostles of power and the sea still develops such splendid types of character when one with Christlike spirit knows how to discover, train and place them.

6. The college or seminary town, when the institution of learning in it is under religious in-

fluences, is specially favored. The fine opportunity to educate young people in the classics while in home environment is itself beyond price. Many are induced by the presence of the college, to pursue extended courses who would not, or think they could not, leave home to do it. It is a general awakener and mighty stimulus to higher life in every way. The atmosphere of refinement and culture created is helpful. The presence of the college faculty gives an intellectual tone to social life. The churches secure better equipped pastors necessarily and the singing and worship are enriched. A few strong men in the local church in some cases frown upon unusual attention given to students, making a perplexing problem to the pastor but these are probably exceptional. These towns are among the first to drive out the saloon and are ideal places for the training of children. The opportunity of the church is of that higher sort which means intensive culture, the presentation of loftiest ideals of life, and of the noblest things of Christlike character. There may be trained great leaders for the church.

All these special types of town are yet distinctively rural. Life is simple, freer in social intercourse, and not over-crowded. The church can accomplish far more than in cities with the same effort and money.

Civic reforms are attainable which in cities

would have no chance of victory. Home life, sweet and strong, is there. The town must be arrested in its spiritual and moral decay, and may be started upward into large realization of the Kingdom of God.

CHAPTER VI.

THE RURAL SUBURB.

BLESSED is that suburb which finds as it begins expanding, an aggressive and spiritual church in the midst. By its shepherding of the new families as they come, they are deeply influenced or captured, and the character of a suburb has actually been made Christian by one such church. The story is an inspiration to others to do likewise.

There are suburbs, so called, with manufacturing and other industries whose population and characteristics are the same as those of factory towns. Proximity to a great city gives the additional advantage of city inspiration to some extent and some influence from city ideals. But otherwise the religious and moral conditions are those of the town we have just been discussing. In reality such "suburbs" are large towns near a city, and their people not only sleep and eat evening dinners there, but live there altogether and have their daily work and all other interests in the place.

The other kind of suburb, which must be distinguished from the town, is purely a residence community, usually of the salaried people of a city or of its business men. For the men it is, during the week, simply the sleeping place and the place for good evening dinners, and on Sunday the place to which they immediately return, as many of the residents do, from a morning church service in the city. Or, more justly, on the whole in every way it is the place of their comfortable, attractive, and restful homes.

There are grave religious perils in the residential suburb. With most of these the pastor and Christian people are only too deeply impressed for they are despairing about them, but they usually overlook some of the obstacles even greater.

I. There is the danger of satisfaction with a fine church building and a good Sunday morning service. The structures for worship in suburbs are usually handsome as they ought to be with the wealth of the residents and the character of their own homes. The people point with pride to them and often wonder what more is necessary. And if they have, besides, a fairly good preacher for Sunday morning service what more could be expected of them? "To go to an evening service? And to prayer-meeting and a lot of other services during the week?" Well, they came out to the country to rest, and the neighborhood is made up of good people, and they

have been attending church services all their life!

The good men and women, however, who would reduce their children, by their own non-attendance, to only one really inspiring service a week, and to so small spiritual culture, forget that they themselves did not become the matured Christians they are, loving Christ's Church, on one religious service in early life. They tell you of two lengthy sermons and worship, of two sessions of the Sunday-school, of an attractive mid-week service, of religious homes with instruction and worship, and of personal devotional habits of Bible reading and daily prayer. In New England in the colonial days the old church was town hall, school, library, social center and church in one.* They assembled Sunday morning with practically every man, woman, and child present at nine o'clock to have an all comprehensive prayer earnest and long, a sermon of more than an hour, then cold lunch and a second sermon of sometimes two hours. But that discipline and teaching gave Massachusetts hundreds of famous men of ripest character and scholarship to a few score from five other states under "modern" church life. Why should these suburban Christian parents expect their children to grow great in character on one small service a week and no home religion? Are they ready to

* Dr. Hillis, in "Man's Value to Society." He judges by prominence in Encyclopedias.

forfeit all matured Christian habits and deep spiritual life of their children to indulge in home lounging which they call rest? And then in later life have those children by their godlessness and selfishness fearfully break into the rest, the aged parents will then desire so much more? By all the gratitude Christian parents feel for their early religious life they ought to furnish what is just as good for their children.

2. This danger is general of making the suburb chiefly the place of absolute inactivity and of evening and Sunday dinners prolonged beyond reason. That very home, sweet home, is the creation of the church, and it cannot long be sweet or restful when the church loses its vigorous spiritual life or the home is separated from it. This cannot too often be said. Home will be enjoyed all the more if its pleasures are adjusted to real activity in a broad and stirring church work in the suburb. Lounging in absolute inactivity is not real recuperation to a normal mind. It is itself wearisome and after a while intolerable, and so in these people who plead for exemption from Christian work that they may rest at home, we see the strangely inconsistent development of extended and exciting Sunday dissipation, and long hours of absence from the home on tiresome rides and visits. They cannot stay all the time in their homes with satisfaction to their active natures.

There are splendid Christian people, on the

other hand, who have learned that the need of fellowship for highest joy, and of usefulness to others, is met exactly and fully by a larger church activity, and then the home becomes sweetest of all and continues so to the end of life.

3. The danger of continuing to hold church membership in the distant city. This is a most perplexing problem for really fair and discriminating study. The city church in many cases sorely needs the attendance, the financial support, and service to the extent he can render, of the wealthy suburbanite. Lifelong associations of the most tender sort bind him to that church, and if he is past middle life he hesitates to break these, knowing the difficulty of forming new associations. He hopes to attach his children as firmly as himself by regular Sunday morning devotion to the city church. But that church is rapidly changing in spite of every effort to hold all its people, and the children as a matter of fact are not acquiring their parents' love for it. The children attend Sunday-school in the suburban church and Sunday night service there. The discerning Christian father will decide that he must join that church for the sake of his children, and some of them are wise indeed to conclude further that they must throw themselves into that church with all their experience and ability as Christian workers. Many Christian parents are not so observant nor so prompt in doing the

safe thing for their homes and future, and they relapse into irregularity in all church-going and into loss of real interest in either place. They cannot work efficiently in the distant city church and they excuse themselves because of membership in the city from any important work in the country. Multitudes of able men and women, whom the Kingdom of Christ cannot spare, thus have discharged themselves early in life. It is a grave peril for all concerned, to the city church lest by selfishly holding on to men whom it cannot help nor use, that church forfeits the blessing of God, to the country church, and most of all to the man himself.

4. The danger grows if the churchman in the suburbs keeps all his other interests in the city—if he goes to the city for all intellectual associations, for social entertainment, and for his friendships. Of course he must necessarily look there for the best for a long time to come. But there is every good reason, and every selfish one, for beginning to plan some intellectual resources in his neighborhood, and for forming such friendships as may be. Otherwise there will be for him no neighborliness and no community interest. The isolation of families on crowded city streets and avenues with constantly changing tenants, may be unavoidable in large measure, but to carry it into the permanent settlements of the open country is unchristian and silly pride. Intimate friendships are not formed in a

day and may be left to slow growth but a kind neighborliness is possible at once to be cultivated. It costs nothing and it blesses those who give and those who receive.

5. There is lastly the danger of extremes of riches and poverty. The retinue of servants and serving men about the suburban mansion form a class distinct from the family. The master and servants, the lady and her maid, in many cases go to the same church and introduce social caste there. It is a perplexing problem to be solved only by spiritually intensifying church activity and Christlike love.

Now after this assuredly full exhibit of the difficulties let us look as fairly at the advantages for Christian work in the suburban church.

1. The church is more important relatively than in the city. It is the only public building and its bell the only sound that breaks the Sabbath-like quiet during the week and wakens sweet memories on Sunday. This gives the church a great opportunity.

2. Fellowship between the churches in a suburb is usually close and genuine. The pastors in many cases are intimate chums and their congregations fuse easily and strongly for general town enterprises. This gives civic and community opportunity of a commanding character.

3. There are more fully equipped pastors than in the towns. Larger salaries are paid, a thoroughly educated ministry is demanded and se-

cured, and this constitutes a factor of very great power.

4. For the same reason the laymen in these churches are abler and more influential. The laymen in suburbs who go into the churches as Sunday-school superintendents and teachers, as vestrymen, trustees or deacons, are men and women of large education, broad general culture, and experience in the management of great enterprises.

5. There are, therefore, larger financial resources as a rule for Christian work. The pastor may plan many helpful adjuncts of the church with freedom and if he skilfully develops them he will have no lack of money to work efficiently for the community.

6. The children of the best homes in most cases at once and the young people, are accessible to the local church. The parents now are more difficult to win, or at least, the fathers may be. But they will come later if the church ministers helpfully to the young people.

7. Where the town is incorporated it is a gain, and where it is not, steps should be taken to develop a strong and excellent local government.

8. There is special opportunity for some lines of summer work. The church is often at its best in the summer, the attendance at maximum, and the Sunday-school is largest. Very attractive out-door evening services may be planned. A grove near by may be seated for lectures and

special musical entertainments. Simple games and amusements may be provided for the community at immense gain in fellowship and the neighborhood spirit. In a few choicely situated places even larger courses of study and summer assemblies are possible.

On the whole the suburb has a formidable spiritual inertia because the erstwhile powerful forces of the city have come to a standstill. But in aggressive push upon this condition, there is a corresponding rich reward. When the forces again move they possess the power they had in the city without meeting the obstacles of the city. There is no better field to the church that is filled with the Holy Spirit in a modern and complete church organization of all her members and resources.

CHAPTER VII.

A GREAT FUTURE FOR RURAL DISTRICTS.

THE surprising reversal, in a decade, of the drift of population from being city-ward to becoming rural* is only one of many momentous changes on the horizon of our country districts. This drift of the people so strongly to the country is itself a result of changed conditions, rather than a cause of them, though it brings still further improvements there, and thus accelerates the movement. There is profound interest in it for economic reasons, and also sociologically, but no less for Christian life which is our chief concern here.

The prospect for the American farmer and his farm was never before so alluring. The farmer's work is to become a scientific profession, and the growing intellectual ability of the man with the hoe in his broadening range of studies related to the farm is a matter of common observation.

* See Chap. II. Census of 1900 compared with 1890 as to urban and rural populations. Estimated populations since (U. S. Census Bulletins 1906) shows drift to country continues.

His college-bred son is willing to return to the farm and spend his life upon it with scientific enthusiasm. And not only the farm but the cross-roads village and the country town are destined to share in a wonderful future already well begun.

Let us trace some of the plainer lines of this development, and with eyes always open to their effect upon the spread of Christ's Kingdom in country places, carefully consider them.

1. The great movement for good roads which is receiving so great favor in large appropriations in many states of the Union. Even the Lincoln Memorial is to be a great highway from Washington to Gettysburg, so great is the enthusiasm for scientific and permanent road building. What do good roads signify? All that closer and more frequent communication and intermingling of people may bring to pass. For business it means less wear and tear, more rapid marketing, and even with slight increase of taxation, greatly reduced expenses and larger income. For the church it means increased attendance from longer distances, an uninterrupted series of meetings made possible, and closer fellowship of the people. The wet weather obstacle is largely removed by good roads. What is to become of the "dry weather Christian" left without excuse, in the new era?

In the light of these advantages think of the millions of dollars appropriated by Pennsylvania,

Maryland, and other states for the scientific building of great highways all over their commonwealths. In many cases the states require equal appropriations from the counties, thus doubling the money for the movement. Think of the automobile influence everywhere compelling the construction and maintenance of other highways of the best kind. There is vast improvement already and this movement is sure to spread until every church is accessible in winter and summer, in rain or shine, by foot or carriage, to all its people almost as much as in the city. There will be no more lonely farm-houses, no homes separated from civilization by miles of impassable mud lanes, and no closed churches when it rains. The lazy member must look for another excuse.

2. Electric railway development is progressing with ever increasing breadth. Most of these railways are profitable, for the expense of power, wages, equipment, and maintenance is far below that of steam railways. These electric cars climb the hills and spin through the valleys in regions beyond where any other could go with small expense of leveling, grading, or tunneling. There are counties in the old states with a remarkable network of electric railways reaching to every part, so that one can make headquarters in the large city returning to it every night, and reach every little town and crossroads for afternoon and evening meetings. Conventions can be held in

the central place and people from twenty towns and surrounding country can attend day and evening and return home for the night. The small expense for the trip does not exclude even the poor from such stimulating meetings and fellowship. The frequency of these trips, their routes often to the very doors of the people, and their short stops, make them the ideal carriages of the common people. No king one hundred years ago could have a coach warmed in winter, lighted up to read at night, running smoothly with scarcely a jolt, and more swiftly than his fastest horses. Through the loving Providence of the Heavenly Father his poor children have them now.

Shall we not regard this electric car as the new message of the Father to reconstruct our plans for Christianizing in the country? It is a marvelous addition to Christian resources. Let the imagination loose to define what changes it will inevitably produce in the rural home, in business, in education, on the farm, and above all on the religious and rural life of three-fourths of the American people! It has already brought about new attractions in the situation of country homes, in the number of visits the country young people make to the city, and in the mutual influencing of city and country. But when it has had a new generation to work upon from earliest childhood it will produce a new race in the farmhouse.

3. The telephone is common in large sections of the country and in towns it is more generally used by families than in cities. The annual cost in cities is prohibitive to ordinary people but the smaller charge, generally about one-fourth that in cities, in rural communities puts it within reach of almost every home. Pastors in these towns almost universally have it and they can call a meeting of their deacons, trustees, of their Sunday-school teachers, and of certain influential families in a half hour without rising from their study chair, the few who have no telephone being reached by their near neighbors with any message. I have known a large meeting to be worked up by several telephones in a day. The pastor calls up the home in affliction or distress every morning and sends his sympathy by lightning. He saves time from errands of many kinds for larger reading and study, and so does the reading-loving farmer save hours from trips to the store or freight office, or other places, and spends them upon splendid farm journals, books and general magazines. What a blessing all this signifies! No one but the farmer knows what weary hours and days he spent upon deep mud roads on errands the telephone does for him in an instant now. He can now have home also in longer fellowship. The telephone in large measure ends the farm loneliness and its isolation from the present day world. The whole family use it for social conversation. Their home is in

constant neighborliness with other farms and with the town or city miles away. It is very interesting to watch the smaller children from six years up going to talk with playmates or little friends on the telephone. They will never know the old loneliness at all, and we shall soon have a generation of farm people with a fine social consciousness and splendid community of interests. It is a fascinating mental excursion of the imagination again to try to define the changes rapidly coming by this gathering of multitudes of separated farm-houses into one neighborhood connected by these wonderful nerves of thought, feeling, and new purposes, rather like one vast living organism. Summing up the transformation wrought by good roads, electric railways, and the telephone on the old farm and the little village, it amounts to a revolution to larger religious and moral possibilities.

4. Rural free delivery of mails is another incalculable addition to the farmer's power and enjoyment. The growth of it has been amazing. Rural delivery was first officially suggested by Postmaster-General John Wanamaker in his annual report for 1891. Congress was so slow to adopt it that the first three experimental routes were established as late as October 1, 1896 in West Virginia. But in nine months it had extended to 83 routes scattered over 29 states.

The number of rural routes in operation

throughout the United States, June 1, 1909,* was 40,637 served by 40,508 carriers. All these are daily routes except 668 which are tri-weekly, but no mail is served on Sundays or holidays. Rural delivery reaches approximately 20,000,000 people in all the states and territories, except Alaska, and in all parts of the states and territories except unsettled or sparsely settled portions. The cost to date has been about one hundred and seventy millions of dollars, the present annual cost being nearly thirty-six millions, or almost two dollars expended by the Government for postal facilities for every man, woman and child in these rural sections.

Here is a national army of forty thousand men, almost as large as the regular army of soldiers, on daily duty to establish fortifications for the national welfare in diffusing general intelligence and developing social ties which will be more powerful than ironclads or material ramparts. It staggers the imagination to foresee what this rural delivery alone will accomplish for American civilization in fifty years. When we remember that it has in twelve years permeated to every village and cross-roads in every state and territory, that it is therefore national in its scope, and that it is a daily service at every farmer's door or at the end of the short lane, who can estimate what an addition to all

* Letter to author from Fourth Assistant Postmaster-General, June 24, 1909.

his other newly acquired advantages is the daily free delivery of mail to the farm and the cross-roads village. The metropolitan daily newspapers are read before noon in farm homes two hundred miles from the city in every direction. The farm is a vital part of the great busy world, and all the interests of humanity are discussed by the farmer boy and his father in the barn, and in the kitchen by the mother and daughter. The newspaper is a mighty civilizer and in many respects goes before to prepare the way for Christianizing. Let the church be alert to follow where the newspaper clears the way. That equally wonderful forum for everything in the welfare of man, the monthly magazine, lies on the farm-house table under the brilliant coal-oil lamp at every issue. The young people's library is next, already growing in many such homes. Larger correspondence between friends also has grown, this resulting in more frequent visits, and thus the farm children and their parents are becoming really traveled people. So naturally and inevitably does one movement of civilization connect with another. It is the same old farm and the same little village but not the same slow, uninformed, isolated farmer and his family. And it will not long be the same old farm nor the same uninteresting village as we have already noted.

To the children and young people these innovations are as of birthright. They know of

nothing else in many sections and they grow by them intellectually, morally, and broadly intelligent and sympathetic citizens of the world from the start. Think of that splendid product, the manhood and character from the country in the past, surely the future will have a much abler and more refined man and woman to pour into the cities or to retain on the farm in large numbers.

Small packages from near-by towns are now authorized to be carried by the mail men privately. The Postal Package will come some time soon in spite of opposition by private transportation companies and long delay by Congress, greatly trying to the people. But even with the exorbitant present charges for carriage, the farmer is shopping by mail in great cities. Have you ever been in the village home when the bulky annual catalogue of the mail order house arrives? Have you seen the family pore over it day after day at their leisure? The catalogue is itself an education in the comforts and conveniences of highest civilization, and the farmhouse and the village home are discussing the luxuries formerly only found in finest city homes. We could here describe farm homes of modest means that are cultured, elegant and delightful places.

5. Postal Savings Banks also will follow, the farmer will then anticipate a retired life before old age, and prepare to make it attractive with

travel, fellowship, and larger usefulness to mankind.

6. All these new things will mean a large intermingling of city people and country people farther out each year. The suburb is now here but some city families already go out to country towns and remote villages. Their fine mansions with great lawns of many acres and forest are springing up everywhere. The people of city and country are next neighbors in mutual respect. Into the village come the ideals and the pushing activity of the city, and to the city family the meditation and repose of the country. What then will the farmer of to-morrow become? It is indeed a glorious prospect, but shall the church be the last to see what it signifies of opportunity for her to bring the Kingdom of Christ into large realization in rural districts?

7. The farmer is only in the beginning of great help from Governmental agencies and investigations. It is almost a new book of miracles which is published annually by the Hon. James Wilson, United States Secretary of Agriculture. Really wonders of advancement are made on American farms from the untiring research by eminent scientists into every matter that affects soils, best seeds, largest possible crops, methods of planting, protection of crops, harvesting, and marketing; how untold millions of dollars are saved, and the labor of the toiling lightened and more richly rewarded at every turn; how a new

interest in all his work amounting to enthusiasm as for a learned profession has been created; and how the dignity of farm work has grown in public esteem. Agricultural colleges are training for the new marvels of farming; farmers' institutes are profoundly discussing every problem of their new profession under the lead of state and national government experts, sixty such experts being employed by Pennsylvania and scores by Wisconsin and other states, every winter, to go two by two, or often three by three, on their apostolic tours for better farms in all parts of these states; a richly entertaining and scientific literature about farm work and its possibilities has sprung up in a decade;* and now former President Roosevelt has stirred up all the farmers and village dwellers to consider improvements in their homes and environment, their schools and village conditions, appointed a learned Commission to confer with them about it, and on one day,† the earnest men of the soil and the plow met in public gatherings all over America. They discussed certain questions and suggestions sent them by the Commission and the wonderful interest in it all is shown by one hundred and twenty-five thousand papers from them. These answers of the farmers treat in an illuminating way of the wonderful, new life coming to country America.

* See Section II. chap. VII. for larger treatment of these movements.

† The first simultaneous Institutes, Dec. 5, 1908.

No other business is considered by the Government with such paternal solicitude and helpfulness. Its results already stagger the imagination to measure, but it is only within ten years that really practical help has been given farmers by agricultural colleges, and as yet only a small fraction of the farmers of America have been reached by their helpful movements, and some of those reached have been all too slow to avail themselves of the valuable instruction. Yet many pages might be filled with the success of the new type of farmer in his crops, his stock, his fruit, and his dairy. And the new spirit is rapidly spreading as the reception to former President Roosevelt's Commission amply gives evidence. It was predicted that agricultural communities would resent the President's effort as impertinent meddling into their affairs. But with few exceptions all the farm journals enthusiastically supported the movement, and the immediate result of gathering what has already been accomplished in home and village improvements points the way for all, and immensely stimulates progress.

Government enterprise in reclaiming from the desert millions of acres of the best land, the stupendous schemes of irrigation,* the scientific

* Census Bulletin 231 gives total value of crops for 1899 on irrigated lands in the arid states and territories \$84,433,438, total acreage 5,711,965, first cost per acre \$7.80, annual cost of maintenance per acre only 38 cents, and average value of crop per acre \$14.81 a year, nearly twice the first cost of the system.

analyses of soils which produced surprising ways of fertilizing great sections hitherto almost worthless, the remarkable discovery of "dry farming" other vast areas, are marvelous achievements. The introduction of new grasses, plants, fruit, and better stock of seeds from foreign lands and by culture are other really monumental contributions. Farm pests and parasites are being annihilated. Farm animals are having a real evolution almost miraculous, one southwestern farmer having crossed the ox with the buffalo and produced a permanent new flesh-bearing animal of finest qualities, among many such. And that wonderful wizard with plants, Luther Burbank, of California, produces new fodder of nourishing richness from the cactus, and new fruits, grains, and flowers.

All these new aspects of farming make it now America's wonderland for science and inventive genius. Men of scholarship and high character are going into it, and who can predict what it will be even in ten years? The shift of general interest from city problems to the farm is very significant. Let us specially be grateful as we think of what it will mean for the country church and for the young people on the farm and in the village, and let us not fear to construct large plans for the church and for the community to meet these opportunities. The organization for Christian work* which we propose later will not seem large in the face of such a future.

* See Sections II. and III.

8. Consider the present extraordinary prosperity of the farmer. Panics may rack great cities, smaller cities and manufactures, but the farmer gets ever higher prices and disposes of all he can grow. What should this mean for better homes, finer churches, and larger investment in all Christian work?

9. The great growth of cities, it is self-evident, will stimulate a correspondingly great development of farms, for the farms must support the cities. It can easily be gathered from census returns that our best farms are located in the older and most populous states. The yield of wheat for the acre in Massachusetts is fifty per cent. above the average of the whole country.* The great city is not deteriorating and depleting the rural districts around it but actually and most wonderfully developing them. Here the highest prices are received for all productions, here intensive garden farming is carried on with its specializing of farmers into growers of particular crops, and here the increased facilities of travel eliminates the middleman largely in the farmer's business.

The specializing of farm industries is an exceedingly interesting evolution of a few decades past. There are now specialist growers of celery, of asparagus, of strawberries, of melons, and other vegetables and fruit; there are orange men, apple men, peach men, banana men, and

* Census of 1900—35 bushels² per acre to 23 bushels per acre in other states, in round figures.

grape men, there are great duck farms where the little ducklings are forced by feeding several times a day and even aroused at night by electric lighting for another stuffing meal, so that in ten weeks from the egg a five pound duck is ready for market and twenty-four cents wholesale a pound is the farmer's reward for it. The immense egg farms, squab farms, and other specializings in poultry and in large animals are well known. And the various kinds of dairy farms have grown to immense proportions near great cities.

This proximity to city life develops the farm home in every luxury of modern civilization. The young people are fully satisfied to remain there and with scientific enthusiasm still further develop the wonders of new stock of animals and plants. Thus the city and the farm join hands in mutual growth in wealth and in the comforts of civilization.

10. The rapid elimination of the saloon from rural districts goes sweeping on. Three-fourths of rural America now has no saloon, and it would take a volume to detail all that this really signifies to young and old, for economic, social, and moral well being. The writer has recently visited for days and weeks rural sections with the saloon and without it, and has seen the greatness of the difference.

11. The growing enthusiasm for the farm has reached the young man from college. A maga-

zine * has just published the true story of a splendid farm with its cultured proprietor, whose son after a thorough classical and scientific training in college goes back with eagerness to spend his life on it. The scientific problems of agriculture, the new and exact methods of tilling, and the comforts, social connections and attractions of the business with modern conveniences make it really, as we have said, a learned profession and a delightful occupation.

12. These new alignments of rural people with the world mean that henceforth they will share in the world's marvelous modern progress. For a long time the country was left far behind in the march. And the advance of the world is with accelerating rapidity. As much progress in every way was made in the first fifty years of the nineteenth century as in hundreds of years before. The next twenty-five years made even more than those wonderful fifty; and the last twenty-five years of that century twice as much beyond that. The first ten years of the new century will speed the world on higher relatively than any twenty-five previously have done. The imagination is burdened in attempting a flight ahead. It is comforting to know that country America is keeping step in all the forward movement.

13. The new education is pushing to the doors of the farm home. There are township high

* *World's Work*, Feb., Mar. 1909.

schools which receive the pupils from the district school and prepare them for college. The grading of the district school, the better teachers in many places, and the larger courses of study are inspiring advances.

14. The country is catching the enthusiasm of the age for nature study and when once fairly begun it will sweep through towns and villages as it has in certain cities. What rich fields lie at the doors of the boys and girls, and the men and women, in rural districts for this delightful study! The native birds alone furnish a lifetime with material for thorough observation; and the teeming insect life, and the plants and flowers are other fields for specialists. This nature study is now internationally organized and the boy on the farm can receive regular contributions of gorgeous insects from tropical regions, and from the Orient in exchange for the native specimens which he can prepare in superabundance. This will still further connect his farm home with the civilized world and broaden and mature splendid character.

Here then is a new thing under the sun, the gentleman farmer loving his plow and his harvester, proud of his educated sons and daughters, who are glad to stay with him in the cultured home they have constructed. He is ready to join church leaders awake to the new situation, and he is able to plan with them to meet it.

The church* as usual is the last to arouse herself to understand the civilization her gospel has produced, but surely she is not going to drowse any longer in the midst of multitudinous open doors in rural districts. Let her forget the things that are behind and anticipate, as business men do, the demands of the near future, to realize the call of God to her in the new Country America.

* See splendid exceptions of churches in Sec. III.

SECTION II.

HOW CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES
MUST BE SPREAD AND MADE
CONTROLLING IN THE COUN-
TRY.



CHAPTER VIII.

THE TWOFOLD WAY OF PROPAGATING THE GOSPEL.

IN many illuminating symbols and parables Christ teaches that there are two ways of extending the kingdom he came to establish among men.

By one way the kingdom of God spreads in the earth like the branches of a great tree far out to protect and shelter; this is shown by the mustard tree grown from a tiny germ to immense height and breadth. By the other way it expands like leaven, the leaven which is hidden in the meal and kept in that vital relation to it for a transforming work of particle after particle.

Again, one way is that the disciples are the light of the world which streams far out beyond personal contact; the other is that they are the salt preserving the purity of all who unite with them.

Of these two ways, the light spreading must signify the conquest of the world by gospel truth and ideals which has resulted in Christian civilization, the development of all Christian in-

stitutions like hospitals, orphanages, benevolent movements, the extension of Christian truth about the rights and duties of man, human relations, and all that we now know as the influence of Christ upon society, upon fundamental law, and upon all world movements; the other way is the saving of individual men by the new spiritual life symbolized by infusing into the dead mass of meal a transforming leaven, the leaven which here stands for the kingdom of heaven, and then uniting them into a church to be mutually preservative as salt. The disciples as salt to each other do not purify, for Christ alone is the purifier as Saviour. The function of the church, however, is well expressed as salt to its members.

It is foolish to talk of the purifying power of salt as any one can see who will experiment with it on tainted meat or decaying vegetables.

In the values set upon the kingdom of heaven this twofold distinction is continued. To one view it is a treasure, probably a treasure box of large size, found in a field and containing presumably money, tools, weapons, and other articles for every-day use. This is the value of salvation for the individual's supply of his needs. A comfort in sorrow, a weapon in temptation, a supply for hunger and thirst for righteousness in life and character; a large amount of money also which could be converted into the necessities of daily life is what the treasure box prob-

ably contained. But the other parable of value is a pearl, the royal symbol of beauty, of glory, of noble achievement; it may finely represent the ideals of Christianity for society, like the brotherhood of man, the inalienable rights of the individual, of the woman, of the child, the worldwide democracy, the sonship with God, and other ideals and standards of Christianity for civilization.

This pearl stands for the immeasurable influence of Jesus and his gospel in the world at large. That influence has struck the colossal image that Nebuchadnezzar saw, the worldwide empires, fearful despotisms, gigantic oppressions of men, and ground them to powder. Child murder has gone forever, widow burnings, witch burnings, slavery, torture of prisoners, cruelties unnamable, oligarchies, spoliation by kings and other horrors and wrongs; law has come, merciful, just, impartially administered; institutions educational, benevolent, rescuing; love has come into human intercourse in a thousand ways in business and society. All these, through the wide-spread influence of Jesus and the preaching of the ideals and standards of the gospel.

The other way is the salvation of men one by one, Christ's personal work in the individual soul. He does this by dropping the seed deep into the soil of the man's heart and causing it to mature in the fine wheat. But in another parable-picture we see this wheat in the midst of tares,

the tares and the wheat growing together until the harvest. He could not here set forth the influence of the wheat upon its neighbor tares, but this influence is inevitable and through Christ is very powerful and revolutionary. It is set forth in the leaven where the individual Christian's inner life is also imparted to those around him by the power of Christ.

These pairs of parables move along the same two lines. They exhibit the two general ways of the spread of the principles of the gospel which we are seeking to put into control of rural communities. There is little need now of emphasizing the duty of a propaganda for individual accessions to Christ and his church. Christian people clearly apprehend this gospel method, but they do not often so clearly discern that the world is being conquered for Christ by his truth as well as by his salvation. Both of these lines of propaganda, by the leaven and by the mustard tree, by the salt and by the light, by the seed dropped into the heart, and by the influence of the church without, that is by the accession of new disciples and by the spread of ideals, have been in operation since the day of Pentecost. The preaching of the whole gospel of Christ, spiritual, ethical, social, will always start both lines of development. The statistics of Christianity to-day must include the work of legislatures all over the world, the transformation of business of all kinds, the institutions of

civilization, the educational movement, and the new kind of popular and humane governments in all the world.

By the conquest of his truth, the sense in which he said to Pilate he had come to be the world's king, Jesus Christ is rapidly coming to his world-wide enthronement. By universal acknowledgment he is the prince of all teachers of true righteousness. And while we insist on that as only the first battle won, and that his victory is not complete until he has become every man's individual Saviour, we will not undervalue the wonderful meaning of it. The truth of Christ prevails.

Our problem of methods, therefore, is in Christianizing country places to discover what sort of organization or organizations are required to spread the kingdom most effectively within the church to largest numbers of individual conversions, and what movements outside the church will effect a conquering Christian civilization. This second series of movements should be discussed next in order; it is the social work of the gospel, and then the evangelistic work.

The actual situation in the country is to be regarded. We have seen this situation to be, in the midst of a brilliant promise for the future, usually an unattractive and struggling church, and outside of the church few if any movements in general for mutual helpfulness. What can be done?

CHAPTER IX.

GOSPEL PRINCIPLES FOR CHRIST'S WORKERS.

CHRISTIAN work surely ought to be done in accordance with Christ's declared principles for the worker. Much earnest work has been unsuccessful because the worker has failed to recognize Christ's principles or has ignored them. Even the every-day work of the world is necessarily a real co-operation with God's laws in physical nature or in economics, and many of the principles we shall name, or the substance of them, have been adopted by the world. In developing a Christian civilization, we must still more sincerely and fully live by them.

What, then, are the principles underlying Gospel ways of working?

1. God is ever for organization, sinful man all for chaos and anarchy. The perversely blind opposition in country churches to every step toward a more complete organization of the local church is one of the relics of barbarism, of which there are a curiously large number persisting

to our day. If we are to be workers with God, we shall see that he everywhere has marvelously organized his work. The stars of the universe are in wonderful systems, our earth is one of them with the sun as the center and with every planet forming a marvelous machine, working with almost perfect regularity; all flowers and leaves are constructed with mathematical precision; the bodies of animals and of man are inimitable organisms; and even stones and sand in modern science and philosophy are more wonderful constructions than man's mind was thought to be formerly.

The stock objection to complete church organization is that the power of the Holy Spirit is more important. This seems very religious until we remember that the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God looking for human bodies through which to express himself, requires such bodies to be holy, consecrated, knowing the truth, and united with his people. Which means well organized individually as the apostles were after three years' daily training by the most wonderful of teachers, practice in preaching and Christly works, and ten days' incessant prayer. (Acts 1:2; Romans 12:1.) The power did not, however, come upon them individually when apart but when in one accord in one place. It came upon the organized church when every member of it was a worker. Doubtless, the Holy Spirit will always come upon a church in

that condition but such a condition to-day can be achieved only by most complex and complete organization. Let the objector try to realize it without organization if he can.

In what a distressing condition of half-developed, less than quarter-developed life, the church is found after so many attempts to do it without adequate organization! The average church uses about one-tenth of her membership as real workers, many of these holding four or five offices; she gets regular income from only one-third of them and few of these are proportionate and systematic givers or cheerful givers; she makes personal workers in soul winning of less than one in fifty of them, has habits of church-going in not half of them, and the prayer-meeting habit in one-twelfth of them. Yet there are pastors in towns and villages,—never mind those in cities—who solemnly argue that the church is over-organized! As well might a man, two-thirds paralyzed, and stiff, think he was too active because the other third became somewhat over-tired from extra work.

The question of the power of the Holy Spirit versus organization is like asking which is more important, the steam or the locomotive? Try steam without a body of perfectly organized material to express it and of what value is it? No one of course wants the locomotive alone, for there is no antagonism between the finest modern type of a hundred ton engine and the highest

steam pressure in her safe boiler. Rather, the splendid locomotive invites the steam at once to be given to her. So does a magnificently organized man like Paul most fully express the Holy Spirit, and so does a church vital in every member to his last talent by a marvelous organization really invite the Holy Spirit to enter into her many-sided work. He will there have his largest opportunity for the continuation of really Christlike work which is the Spirit's mission in the Church.

The man who thinks no organization is needed, pleading for "a minimum of human effort," urges a return to Pentecostal conditions for the conquering times of the gospel. Well, let us indeed return to the preparation which the Apostles had for the Spirit's outpouring in Jerusalem. Has our objector thought of what this preparation really included? Jesus gathered his apostles from fishermen, tax-gatherers, and other occupations, and as faithful Jews they were less ignorant of the Bible than our ordinary converts are, not so greatly absorbed in business and material interests as present day accessions, with a simplicity of conditions in their environment not now even in our towns and villages, and with no diverting and confusing newspapers and other daily sensations to interfere with his training.

Let us give the more difficult material in the natures of present-day people three years of constant daily teaching on great truths of the gospel,

as Jesus did his disciples in preparation for Pentecost. Our additional supreme task is that we cannot have such a teacher as they had and it would take many years more to reach the same stage of spiritual growth. Christ's teaching was daily and all day, every day for three years. He organized them into bands and trained them for wonderful work for the three years. He performed before them miracles of healing, of resurrection of the dead, of power over Nature, and trained them in faith and practice so that they could do the same wonders. They had experiences that will never more come to men in just the form they had them in witnessing Christ's glory, his sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension. An untrained, unorganized, simple-hearted people were they? Let some one calculate how long it would require Normal Teacher Training Classes, Young People's Societies, Brotherhoods, Mission Bands, the Organized Bible Class movement, and every other conceivable intellectual, social, and benevolent movement to bring his church to where the disciples, leaving the Mount of Olives after Jesus' ascension, actually stood in wonderful training.*

Then after his church has been brought to such training let the objector try the spiritual organization of a ten-day prayer meeting like that in Jerusalem. If he has achieved, by a very complete organization of the church to-day, the

* See Dr. A. B. Bruce's "The Training of the Twelve."

same condition as the disciples had, he will have Pentecost after ten days of such prayer, as probably his people never practiced before. Is it not the most superficial study of the early church that fails to apprehend what an almost perfect organization would be required to bring about the same conditions now?

In the same unthinking way, there are many who set individual work over against thorough organization, failing to see that the initiative to individual work by any large number of church members comes only after a superior organization of the church. Let these men show a church without much organization where every man is a successful personal worker, a fine Bible teacher, a large giver, or a splendid Christian character. How will they answer, on the other hand, the question of the Lord when he inquires for the unemployed talents of nine-tenths of his disciples there, for the reason why so few have ever won a soul to Christ, and why with overflowing wealth around us his church goes begging for the pennies on the pitiable Sunday plate? Will they declare that every individual must answer for himself and that they exhorted individuals to do these very things? Why, then, have a church organization at all if it must nullify itself and declare that individual effort is all that is planned? Especially when the resulting lack of individual effort exhibits such a fearful failure. Should not the really godly men, who

take such a position against organized work, re-examine the Scriptural grounds for their attitude?

The argument for individual effort is not against prior church organization but logically for it. A very complex and large organization is required to put every individual into his best adapted place employing most or all of his talents. And only then will any large proportion of individuals do other work beyond their part in the organization. The car runs on alone after it has been well started as part of the long train.

Every step forward in Christian civilization is toward fuller organization. There are no wheels within wheels in a condition of savagery. Every step away from organization of society or of the church is toward chaos and lawlessness. There is no power in the wheels within wheels themselves but they furnish the only medium for the fire and the spirit within to be effective. The man who unites with the church has the right to expect the opportunity of organized work for his efforts. "One a thousand, two ten thousand" is the way organization multiplies power, and it is a necessity for the development of the Christian life.

Shall the church be a workshop with every member at the bench on full time or shall it be a hospital with the good pastor, who will not have societies and associations to use the talents of his people, always busy healing their bruises from

childish quarrels among them? There is no menace in general society more threatening than armies of the unemployed and it is after all a choice between having a varied workshop for a church or having it a hospital.

The plea for organization is fundamental to further progress. Without it the work has stopped. The old simplicity no longer attracts even in the country. The day of the specialist and the expert has come in all work, and surely spiritual work ought to be done as well as shoe-making, or surgery, or the law. The first chapter of Ezekiel seems a wonderful picture of spiritual organization. There are faces, the intelligence of a man, the courage of a lion, the perseverance of the ox, the aspiration of the eagle; there are wheels within wheels, fire in it all; infolding itself ever farther within; wings upon wings for speed, rims of eyes to see every opportunity, hands to grasp them, and a circumference of the work "high and dreadful." In it all the spirit moving this organization of wheels and wings, hands and eyes, with the throne of one like a man above it, the diversity coming into unity of purpose and power.

2. Another practical principle for all Christian work has persistently been overlooked, and without it beginnings have met difficulties insurmountable. No question is more frequently asked, when the organized church is described, how can I begin just where my church is, so

far away from such a condition? The Lord's oft-repeated principle is to accept only willing workers. The pastor or church leader who has tried it in a practical way has made, as the writer did to himself, a really wonderful discovery.

God calls to his service only those who come gladly and willingly. The concrete instance of Gideon's band is typical. The fearful and home loving were not wanted. Only those glad to remain and who were willing to fight. Whatever the service or the offering this must be the spirit or it is rejected.

"Serve the Lord with gladness." Psalm 100: 2.

Praise him with the whole heart. Psalm 9: 1.

Whosoever is of a willing heart bring an offering. Exodus 35: 5.

"With a perfect heart and with a willing mind." 1 Chron. 28: 9.

"God loveth a cheerful giver." 2 Cor. 9: 7.

"Rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer." Acts 5: 41.

"If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted." 2 Cor. 8: 12.

In Deut. 28: 47, a great curse was upon the people because they served not the Lord with joyfulness.

In Psalm 51: 12 (Revision) is a prayer that God will "uphold me with a willing spirit." And so on.

We see clearly that the only worker the Lord

wanted or called was the wholly willing one. We believe, we have no right in his name to accept any others for his work to-day. We forfeit his richest blessing when we constrain those who profess to be his people by one motive or another to engage in his work. There are people, however, who shrink because of undue humility or underestimate of themselves, but who are truly consecrated and really willing and these we may urge to enter the work in full harmony with the principle of only willing service for God. But to gather into the Lord's house a company of his people who come grumblingly and unwillingly, who complain of being expected to give overmuch of their time or money to God's cause, is to foredoom the series of meetings involved or the particular religious enterprise for which they are summoned to failure. Is it not in God's sight a blasphemous insult? How can we expect his blessing?

We may, indeed, be as much dismayed by such a principle of working as Gideon was. But it is the Lord's law from first to last and it always succeeds. There is in every church a number, sometimes small but a sufficient nucleus, who are willing workers. If there are really none at all that church might as well disband. But a fair test in every case after earnest presentation of this principle as Scriptural and the only way to receive God's blessing always surprises the pastor or leader. The Lord has a large number yet in

his church in all the world who take joy in his work. Let us call them out with confidence.

In the most practical view this is the only right way of beginning better work. The band of willing workers, however small, is a germ of power. Their personal leadership is inspiring, undismayed by difficulties and obstacles; they develop a real enthusiasm which becomes contagious, and their personal influence becomes powerful. They are a united force and ten all pulling enthusiastically one way are better than a hundred with forty-five pulling back. The rich blessing of God is at once fully upon them as they work. It has been found that a whole church of several hundred members has been permeated by a new spirit in a year from only eight members who were willing workers. A large number of Sunday-school teachers have been inspired in a year to seek normal preparation and spiritual power by a half dozen of their fellow teachers who gladly began such preparation and could not be discouraged. The joy in the Lord is ever the strength of any work for him. Great revivals have swept over churches started by a little group of glad and willing workers with prayer and personal appeal. Whether for spiritual or other work in the church, or for movements outside, the principle of willing workers is the way to succeed. Ten times their number of drafted soldiers grum-

bling and half-hearted, will not accomplish half as much in a year as they.

3. The Lord's work must be done always with unlimited self-sacrifice. He who shed his blood for us must have for his service men who are willing to die for him. His many calls to service all contain this sacrifice clause.* There is no other way to power, and strange paradox as it is, no other way to highest joy in it. And by another strange paradox of human nature, real and heroic sacrifice is incomparably attractive to men. We see it in American citizenship. Small self-denials for it are resented as when citizens are asked to join civic clubs to study grave problems and pay annual dues, and they have no time for these things, but let there come a national peril and these same people to the number of hundreds of thousands promptly enlisted for service in the Civil War and in the Spanish War, risking lives, business and all.

The appeal to the heroic moves even bad men to remarkable sacrifices. It is the most practical to make to Christians in any condition or circumstances. We wrong God's people when we do not call them to suffer for Christ's cause. The most forlorn hope of a church under an inspiring leadership to heroism has been saved and made a success. It is the splendid Christian principle of sure success.

* Matt. 10: 9, 21, 38; 16: 24, 25; 24: 9; Mark 1: 18; 6: 8; 8: 35; Luke 9: 23.

Goethe says—

“Everything cries out to us that we must renounce !
Thou must go without, go without !
This is the song every hour sings to us hoarsely
Die and come to life !”

From the altar of heroic self-sacrifice comes the hot coal that kindles unquenchable enthusiasm for all Christian work. Without that kind of enthusiasm there are long, dreary struggles, but with it an early and ever larger success. There are too many people trying to live a Christian life without the cross, but whatever it is Christ has settled the matter that it is not the Christian life. Not a cross once in a life-time but the daily cross is the way to conquering power.

4. Another principle lies at the foundation of Christian work. It is that God will call the leaders and workers if we pray him to do it. This is Christ's express direction to those seeking helpers. The call and anointing of the Lord was the secret of power of prophets in the Old Testament and of apostles in the New. The Lord sends men no less really to-day. We gaze upon the white fields of wondrous opportunity until we are driven to our knees. Then God still exercises his unsundered prerogative to choose those whom he desires to fill places of great power and opportunity. And there is a courage and confidence born of the inner consciousness of the call of God that the worker must have for

victory. Jesus spent an entire night in prayer before he chose the twelve and the Primitive Church waited for the Spirit to call men to the work. The discouraged church above all needs to see how practical is this prayer, and have many experiences, as it will have, of remarkable answers to it.

The work of the church in her own proper organization in country places to bring on the Kingdom of Christ will be our larger study in the last section of the book. Its relation to all outside movements is ever close, but these outside activities which Christ represents as the lighting of the world, and the spread of the great protecting tree require large development next in order. Christian civilization of to-day is also to be claimed for Christ. All good character which follows his teaching and is inspired by his ideals is to be credited to him. Sometimes the civilization he has created and the character he has inspired fail to recognize him but he works on leading to still nobler achievements.

What are the means he employs and the channels through which his truth may operate outside?

5. It will be by the development of ideals and standards of nobler life. The practical value of ideals is becoming generally recognized. Herbert Spencer philosophizes that "any proposed system of morals which recognizes existing defects, and countenances acts made needful by

them, stands self-condemned. Moral law requires as its postulate that human beings be perfect." This seems an echo of Christ's words, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

Indeed, a lofty ideal is the most practical of impulses to progress. No man accomplishes much who is not always inspired by ideals, but no man attains an ideal at a single bound. The ideal guides every step forward, it arouses enthusiasm for noble endeavor and for martyr-like sacrifice. Men are no longer afraid of ideals nor discouraged by them. The demand for perfecting things has become as insistent as that of progress.

The ideals of civilization are only other forms of the teachings of Jesus. He is the Light which is now shining to the ends of the earth. But the sublime truths of Christ require centuries to mature in the world's consciousness. The value of individuality took fifteen hundred years, the brotherhood of man eighteen hundred, and the rights of the child and of woman will take two thousand years. So the nobler conceptions of the nature of man, of society, of law, of liberty, of property, of purity, of the family, and of other fundamental principles now in development in Christian civilization.

What then are the outside movements which the light of Christ's teaching has begun and how shall they be started and made triumphant in rural districts?

CHAPTER X.

CIVIC CHRISTIANITY IN RURAL DISTRICTS.

IN many small villages and in the open country there is a loose and wholly inadequate civic government. The local "constable" is supposed to do police duty, but his office is in small repute and only men of inferior character usually occupy it. The local magistrate or "justice of the peace" is a better officer at times but he generally takes no initiative in law enforcement. There is consequently a condition of practically "no government" in many rural sections. Drunkenness, where the saloon still exists is gross, and license laws, loose enough always, are persistently violated. Occasionally a public-spirited citizen, usually a pastor, brings the liquor violator to grief by a legal prosecution, but this is soon forgotten, and lawlessness is resumed and unchecked.

A small group of roughs sometimes terrorizes a country region. They are coarse and insulting to women. They play rough pranks subjecting

neighbors to expense and injury, and they blaspheme God's name shockingly. They are disorderly in the village church when the fancy strikes them to attend. They make the town hideous by drunken rowdyism and far into the night parade its streets with howls and oaths. In a few cases thieving is carried on for a long time, and in one rural county while this is writing, a gang of murderers led by a tavern keeper perpetrated many robberies and murder and though suspected the farmer folk feared to inform on any of them.

Then there are nuisances to the public health unchecked making typhoid fever and other diseases prevalent, bad roads unrepaired, though road taxes are regularly collected, and a general condition of anarchy exists.

These evils of no government and the manifest possibilities of a good local government, call Christian citizens everywhere to establish the best developed possible in every village and farming community. Every church and its people should be persistently agitating for it.

In some states like Ohio there is a city form of government permitted in any community however small that desires it. Places of three to five hundred people have a mayor, clerk, treasurer, six councilmen, a marshal, a street commissioner, a health officer, and a board of education of five members. Others may be appointed by the council. The fees and salaries are nominal

and entail small expense for the security afforded and the local development resulting.*

In other states there is a "borough" form of civic charter for places under ten thousand which may be made equally efficient. In New England the farming regions are divided into "towns" or townships and a strong local government is formed by commissions on health, education, streets and so on. But in many states only the justice of the peace and the constable exist in rural districts, a condition of practically no government, no development; lawlessness and crime. In the town there should as early in its development as possible be secured a city or borough charter. In the suburb nothing is more important, for the suburb has more tempting houses and property for thieves, and police protection is vital to personal safety. And the growth of town pride for improvements will be rapid and gratifying.

In the open country the best possible immediate civic organization should be perfected. The best officers carefully selected and then a local police official appointed. It need not be expensive, for the officers may be honorary, receiving small fees for any service rendered, as is now the law for constables and magistrates. The objection to borough or city charters from

* Read Martin's "New Civic Government"—Am. Book Co., and Albert Bushnell Hart's "Actual Government as Applied under American Conditions."

higher taxes can be overcome by election of honest and capable officials, and there will be large returns for increase of taxation.

There are considerations far beyond the financial which argue for civic development.* The schools require it and that means the future of any place. The character of the child is powerfully influenced by town environment and civic conditions. A practical anarchy is fertile ground for personal lawlessness in children and young people. The country rowdy in the small town is a bad product of such conditions.

The village needs to be kept in touch with civic and political movements of the state and the nation. Every political struggle, especially those for nobler ideals of government, ought to be brought to the village and town by good citizens. The neighborhood political meeting should be arranged for and the best speakers in the campaign engaged. There are few uplifts of the country village and farm comparable to such tours as the Lincoln-Douglass debate, great Prohibition or Suffrage issues, labor and capital discussions and the deeper questions of Christian Socialism. Never were there issues with so clear ethical notes as now. Let the village ring with these political discussions.

Develop the patriotism of the children by well planned observance of national days, the birth-

* See Batten's "New Citizenship"—Carlos Martin's "Christian Citizenship."

days of Lincoln and Washington, Memorial Day, the Fourth of July, by making them great occasions of a musical, spectacular and intellectual character. The public schools should be sure to celebrate the days not suitable for a village festival. Elevate all celebrations to some religious character along with most enjoyable festivities.

Use the flag, our beautiful stars and stripes, always. It should float over every schoolhouse and be a part of the furnishing of every church. Teach young and old to salute it reverently wherever seen.

The local newspaper may be quickened into real helpfulness, and prosperity for itself, if used for civic development. Let the editor invite discussion of local needs and conditions. Let his paper stand for lofty ideals of public order, improvement, and morals. He may well point out that there is financial return in bettering conditions and in local pride; it attracts desirable citizens, enhances values, and promotes general prosperity.

The church has its mission in all this civic revival but not so much as an organization, as by teaching higher standards and by influencing her members to participate in improvements. The pastor can do his effective work through the citizens he stirs to activity and by intelligent counsel.

Some specific things should be effected in all towns and villages.

1. The saloon must be driven out. If a state local option law gives opportunity that is usually the readiest weapon. In the campaign the churches lead, and now that organized Adult Bible classes are sweeping men by tens of thousands into the Sunday-school these classes have led to victory in many places. So the town of Ashland, Ohio, was cleared of saloons, so Hagerstown, Md., stirred a wonderful enthusiasm against the saloon which though defeated in the first struggle will surely win, and these are few of many.

Nevada, Ohio, a village of about one thousand people shows what conditions before and after the saloons are. The statement is made by Mr. H. E. Kinsley, ex-mayor. His own personal transactions in property follow:—

During saloons.		After saloons.			
Bought property for	\$300	Improved	\$200	Sold for	\$900
"	"	"	700	"	"
"	314	"	"	"	\$1800
"	"	Removed buildings	"	lot	1200
"	250	No improvements	"	"	500
"	dwelling	"	300		

and many more of the same kind.

More new sidewalks have been constructed since saloons were abolished than for twenty years with saloons. Almost all old "shacks" harboring undesirable citizens have been removed and good houses built. Few houses to rent while

at one time thirty-five were vacant with saloons open. The rooms occupied by saloons are now taken by legitimate business. He then specifies a surprising list of new business blocks erected since saloons were closed and two new churches costing respectively \$13,000 and \$18,000. Grocery business never so prosperous in spite of changed conditions. Decrease in bad debts seventy-five per cent. A single day's sale under saloons, the highest was \$193, without saloons it reached \$367. Tax levy with saloons four and a half mills, without saloons the same but the balance in bank for the little city increased from \$49 to \$716. No increase of taxes required after saloons were abolished and less expense.

This is a sample of the prosperity that awaits the departure of saloons. A number of personal investigations by the writer in towns with saloons and others without them in several states showed him the astonishing improvement in industrial, moral and social conditions in the latter. Where there is no local option it is possible sometimes to keep out the saloon by energetic resistance to granting of licenses. There is no better form of temperance agitation than such a campaign and every earnest Christian engaged in it will probably have the reward of saving his boys from the perils of strong drink.

2. The curfew law which requires all the children to be in their homes by nine o'clock should be extended to all towns and villages and

with a good local government strictly enforced. The little towns are crowded with children on the street late at night, and learning all sorts of evil.

3. Laws against swearing in public places exist in some states and may be wisely invoked as the writer led in doing, in a town where this demoralizing evil had become intolerable.

4. The petty gambling in cigar stores and other places by slot machines, dice, and other forms should be promptly and completely suppressed. It is specially harmful to boys.

5. Obscene posters and post cards or other pictures must be rigorously excluded.

6. Sunday laws should be reasonably but firmly enforced by Christian citizens.

7. A local Law and Order Association is an excellent support to local officials who desire to enforce laws, but in a town where they very frequently find no apparent public opinion in favor of the enforcement. Law breakers are persistent in bringing all kinds of personal and business pressure against the enforcement of good laws. By the association also the careless or corrupt official is forced to do his duty. An immediate expression of righteous public sentiment is made possible.

8. A policeman should always be in evidence in the streets. Wild and giddy girls and foul-mouthed men are public nuisances, making the town notorious, and the night a fearful school

of vice. The quiet policeman in uniform breaks it up. He is worth a thousand times his modest salary.

Great general reforms are powerful educators in civic Christianity. The anti-slavery crusade incidentally brought a splendid political development to America. It penetrated into hamlet, village, and farm-house and produced a noble patriotism. Its organization ought to have remained to effect other reforms. So may the equally notable Prohibition movement be a blessing to permanent local government. Especially to rural districts, for there the temperance wave is highest and its victories most glorious. Will not good citizens maintain the reform organization for the great battles to come for the American Sunday laws, for the Bible in public schools and for the other features of our Christian government?

Rural American citizenship will largely decide our future issues. Three-fourths of the people live in towns, and on farms, and the proportion will not be likely now to decrease. Vast changes are on the horizon and it is essential that Christian ethics shall rule political ideals of the future. Ultimate America will be worked out in the town and village in a large measure.

The ancient theocracy, making God the real king, must be the Christian citizen's inspiration. His law of righteousness is the only law of continuous progress, and that alone will exalt to

power.* There is no union of state or church in the national acknowledgment of God which lowers the United States flags on vessels during worship, and runs up the standard of the cross; in the Supreme Court decision that this is a Christian nation; in the chaplains of our legislatures, army and navy; in proclamations for Thanksgiving Day, and in other Christian features of our national life. We may well go further without danger of establishing any church. The larger recognition of divine law may not solve all national ills but it educates citizenship to nobler aspirations, promotes law abiding, and we believe brings richer blessings from the King of all kings.

* Read—Dr. W. F. Crafts' "Practical Christian Sociology," "The Sabbath for Man,"—Josiah Strong's "Our Country," "The New Era,"—R. T. Ely's "Social Law of Service"—Washington Gladden's "Applied Christianity."—Prof. Waffle, "The Lord's Day."

CHAPTER XI.

CHRISTLIKE WORK-DAY RELATIONS.

THE "hands" on the farm used to be a great company. The march and music of the swinging scythes, periodically sweetened by the ring of the sharpening stone, was a picturesque sight and experience. The resounding flip-flap of the flails on the barn floor, the fun of the husking party, the barn raising, the threshing days, and then the apple-butter making, and the sugar boiling, and the butchering days and nights, who can ever forget them? Large numbers of people were employed, the farmer and his "hands" ate together in the large kitchen, and were in close social relations. This happily lingers in many sections but the machine has come to stay on the farm, also, and helpers go to other occupations.

It was feared the machine would leave an army of unemployed. But the fewer now needed are harder to secure than the large number of former times. In Arkansas and elsewhere during cotton picking, the farmer drives into town

in the morning and loads up his people after offering large pay, and brings them back at night. So in all sections and for all kinds of farm work it is difficult to get help. The labor problem is becoming a farm problem. Immigrant labor is sought for and must soon be used in large numbers for the American is doing something else in cities and towns. This will introduce strange tongues, alien customs, and break the former close social relations on the farm and in the village. But even here the farm will reach the earliest solution.

Few people have any conception of the magnitude of the American farmer's business. Let us try to see it with somewhat larger vision.*

* FARM PRODUCTIONS OF THE UNITED STATES

1907.

World Almanac, 1909.

		VALUE
Animals, number.....	204,101,922	\$4,423,897,853
Bees, swarms.....	4,109,426	10,186,513
Butter, pounds.....	531,478,141	113,188,453
Cheese, ".....	301,844,172	28,611,732
Cotton, ".....	5,392,944,000	551,506,696
Hay, tons.....	66,677,000	743,507,000
Milk, gallons.....	7,256,804,304
Orchard, bushels.....	212,365,000	83,753,000
Potatoes, Irish, bushels....	207,942,000	183,889,000
" Sweet, "	42,517,414	19,860,919
Sugar, pounds, } all kinds, }	1,500,000,000	51,000,000
Vegetables.....	113,644,398
Wool, pounds.....	298,915,130	129,410,000
Wheat, bushels.....	634,087,000	554,437,000
Corn, ".....	2,592,320,000	1,336,901,000
Oats, ".....	754,443,000	334,568,000
Poultry, number.....	250,623,414
Eggs, dozen.....	1,293,662,433

See for comparison Census Bulletin 237, pages 12, 13, giving production for 1899.

We use round figures to be more graphic. Of the nearly 30,000,000 of people employed in all occupations in the United States, more than 10,000,000 are working on farms, and adding the mechanics, laborers, and professional men and business men in villages and towns we are concerned in our rural labor problem with five millions more, or fully one-half of all people in every occupation in America.

The labor and capital issues are acute in the large cities, but one-half of all the working-people are in ones or twos on farms, or in town mechanical pursuits. Here in the closer individual contact, and warmer personal relations, the employer and employee are not separated and antagonistic, and the country as it comes into more intimate relations with the city by modern inter-communication will probably have large part in restoring Christian relations in the industrial world.*

There are 5,739,657 farms in the United States, of which 3,700,000 are farmed by their owners, so that less than two laborers on an average are regularly employed on each farm. The employer and one helper work side by side, the employer toiling as hard as his helper, and the two on thoroughly fraternal terms. The tenant farmer also usually employs one hand, often in both

* See Roads's "Christ Enthroned in the Industrial World."

cases on part time or by the day, but the relations are close and friendly.

The value of these nearly six million farms is twenty and a half billions of dollars, the annual products being in 1899 \$4,739,118,752 and in 1907 estimated at seven billions and nearly five hundred millions.* This is one-half of the total value of all manufactures in the United States. The dairy business alone yields half a billion dollars a year; animals on the farm are worth five billions and the cereal products annually over two billions, or two thousand millions of dollars. Twenty per cent. of the wheat of the whole world is raised in the United States, seventy per cent. of the corn, and fully seventy per cent. of the cotton of the world.

Think of this army of ten millions of workers on our farms not massed by hundreds or thousands in a few places, or unknown to each other and perhaps designated by numbered tags, but on nearly six million farms by twos or threes on each place, happy, prosperous, well-fed, and away from the distractions, excesses, and many temptations of crowded cities. Is it not on these farms where labor problems may be mightily influenced toward a right solution? Even if the foreign laborer comes to the farm there are yet the very small number that makes social relations easier. May it not be that rural sections shall have the controlling voice in settling in-

* Census Bulletin 237, pp. 4, 5, and World Almanac, 1909.

dustrial difficulties? For the solution must come with brotherly love from both sides, and the first step necessary will be individual development of the work-people. This is exceedingly difficult with thousands herded in one place as in the large city factories or in mines, but how much easier with two or three on a farm.

The foreign laborer is new on the farm but he has long been a problem in mining villages, factory towns, and others. In many places the foreign laborer has brought a social deluge. He has completely changed the customs, business, and even the language of New England farms. French is spoken on the streets and religious processions with noisy bands break the quiet of the old time Sabbath and wake new echoes for the Puritan descendants, who declare, "We can't get used to it."

But there, and in Pennsylvania coal and coke regions, already earnest young Christians are studying the languages of these people and going among them to win them to Christ. The immigration peril is passing into a wonderful opportunity in Christ's kingdom under this new spirit. And nothing will advance the labor and capital problems more surely to their Christlike solution. The gospel for the social life goes with individual salvation.

One individual farmer cannot solve the labor problem very well even for himself. The church can only assist by teaching the brotherhood of

man under the divine fatherhood and by ethical teaching on industrial rights and duties. "No rights without duties, no duties without rights" is a good platform for others than Socialists, who first announced it. It would seem, therefore, that Christian farmers employing laborers should come to a mutual understanding. They should quietly get together and in the Christlike spirit decide upon the largest wages they can afford and the special housing of their work-people. The tenant house on the farm ought to be repaired and made thoroughly comfortable and attractive, for this is a good business proposition. The farmer's family may show many little kindnesses to these people and to their families. Large factories and business places in cities have come to a remarkable development of "Welfare work." The comfort of the man, his health, his intellectual enrichment, and moral quickening are provided for by great dining-rooms, libraries, rest rooms, entertainments, and other kindly attentions. Some of these establishments have a trained expert in such work in charge. Of course it pays in financial returns to these Christian manufacturers but there is no reason to believe that this is the motive for it, as in the case of the American Cash Register Company, the Heinz Company, and the Stetson Company, three very notable instances of large welfare work in beautiful spirit.*

* Wyckoff, "The Workers—The West."

The spirit of this kindness may be on the little farm. It will improve the work and increase profits. The workman will make the interests of the farm his own to the great comfort and satisfaction of the farmer who employs him.

The higher intelligence of the laborer is a paying asset. Whatever arouses a real interest in farm conditions, methods of cultivation, care of stock, and the latest economies on the farm is immensely valuable. The man may well be encouraged to read farm journals, magazines, and books after the proprietor has read them. The pictorial magazines and interesting books will be enjoyed by his family. Self-interest, if it were not always stupidly blind, would dictate the largest intellectual broadening and enriching of the living machine upon which profits so largely depend, just as machines of iron are sheltered, repainted, and oiled by the thrifty farmer. Comfortable living with those who labor for him, less need of supervision of their work, lessening of worry about the work, and the creation of an atmosphere of good will and good cheer will result from all this brotherly interest.

His moral character gives results in even more profitable ways. The shrewd farmer, who cares for none of these kindly ways, may imagine that he can watch the workmen, that they will have little opportunity on the farm to be dishonest or idle, and that he will be more comfortable in keeping such people at a distance. That all wel-

fare work is a beautiful sentiment but not "business." But he will learn that his workmen soon know the game of watch and can play it also. He may discharge them in rapid succession and instruct others if he likes that sort of a thing, for as Lincoln used to say, "For those that like that sort of a thing that is the kind of a thing they like." But the lines on his face will deepen and the burdens grow heavier. The way of the transgressor of brotherliness is becoming increasingly hard. The burden of love is very light and the yoke of mutual help is easy. The crop of character in his own children and in work-people on the farm is the richest and most enjoyable he will ever produce.

If the pursuit of happiness is one of the inalienable rights the Declaration of Independence secured for us it might be well to pursue happiness in a really sensible way.

Keeping the Sabbath as free as possible from work is more than a Christian duty. It is wise and profitable economics. There are many illustrations of the fact that a man will do more work in a year on six days a week and religiously resting the seventh than on a steady seven days a week. Animals will do the same.

Two families in the early days started from New York state to Tennessee by the covered wagon and four horses each, the horses about the same kind in every way. The one rested every Sabbath, the other pushed on anxious to reach

his farm for early planting. The Sabbath keeper reached there first, his horses in fine condition for immediate service on the new place. The other came on a few days afterward with horses too tired to do good work. The Christian farmer has reflected upon all phases of his work which is necessary and merciful on the Sabbath and he avoids all the rest.*

In the suburb the servant girl question is a burning one. Who can throw light upon that? It seems to many impertinent to suggest closer relations, though one would think it important to get at least sympathetic touch with the woman who prepares the food for the mistress and her cultured family, that it may always be sanitary if not appetizing and spotlessly clean. The lofty disdain of people upon whom one depends is ridiculous. Close intellectual fellowship and social intercourse is not possible, shall we say? But Henry Ward Beecher tells how he found some of his richest illustrations in conversation with workmen and servants. They often know one thing exceedingly well, and Beecher was after that special knowledge. Then when he touched that subject it was with most illuminating detail that made his preaching such a delight. Such kindly intellectual relation is often a rich receiving.

Genuine appreciation of good work by servants secures better and better work. Do not

* Dr. W. F. Crafts' "The Sabbath for Man."

mistresses and masters want this better work? It is beautiful to see still so many noble men and women who know how to be Christian masters and ladies, and who have gathered about them in life-long service a company of capable, honest, and faithful workers for all the comforts of those happy homes. These men and women have blessed all who are employed in their homes but they have shared with them in richer blessings. And he who was himself the Carpenter has abundantly blessed them all.

In all daily work the loftiest religious motives may be present. As Phillips Brooks says, "Our daily work, the constant occupation of our life, needs to be done in God's presence and to be shone through and through by him. It is a channel of utterance for the divine life in the soul." And in attitude toward all we do let us heed the word of George Washington, "Labor to keep alive in your breast that little spark of celestial fire called conscience."

CHAPTER XII.

THE COUNTRY STORE IN THE KING'S BUSINESS.

AMONG the unquestionably real stages of progress in Christianizing the world is the moral improvement in retail business. There are men in middle life who remember the methods of a generation ago in the country store, and, for that matter, in all city stores. No price mark was on any goods but the proprietor's secret letters or cabalistic signs. The writer as a boy salesman in a country store for three years used to find much amusement in constructing price marks from sentences selected as the secret. A sentence or phrase which contains ten letters, none of them repeated, was required. For some time our cost mark was based on, "Come and buy." Each letter in order stood for one of the ten figures of Arabic numerals, and thus it was easy to mark the cost with letters that only the merchant or salesman could understand.

Usually only the cost price was marked and the asking price came to be understood from the cost. Thus a basis for a sale was laid and the

prospective buyer began his "jewing down." He promptly objected to the price asked for the article, and the salesman after declaring it was a fair price and could not be lowered, did after some chaffing lower it cautiously. Then another attack, a vigorous defense, and a little lower, still leaving good room for profits. So the sharp intellectual fencing continued, and after many more words in the contest, the price was finally accepted, the goods bought, and possibly charged to be paid when crops came in. The buyer went home chuckling to himself that he had made a fine bargain, compelling a great reduction in price, while the salesman laughed at the buyer's simplicity and knew that after all he received more than he expected.

In those days prices were made for each individual buyer. The merchant and his "clerks" knew the character of every man and woman in such dealings and they knew exactly where to put the asking figure to get out safely in the long struggle. No two people probably were asked the same price except for a few staple articles on which there was no haggling. The contests were not unenjoyable but they were exceedingly demoralizing. One merchant, for instance, had a suit of ready-made clothing to sell. A fair price was asked, fifteen dollars, and being a man tired of the old way and seeking to establish a one-price system, he told his customer solemnly on his word that fifteen dollars was the lowest

possible price. The customer, a sharp-tongued and snappy man, laughed immoderately and said, "Oh, yes! you storekeepers are great cheats anyway, and take all you can get." The merchant laid the suit away and then brought one after another of different prices rapidly until he had completely confused the man. He knew that the first suit had caught the man's fancy, and after chaffing and arguing, crimination and recrimination, had gone on for a long time, he said as if suddenly recollecting, "O, I have a splendid suit I want you to see. But it is twenty-five dollars and not a cent less! I am sure you will like it." He pretended to look for it in several places and at last brought back the suit he had sincerely offered for fifteen dollars, but now being on his mettle, he loudly demanded twenty-five for it!

Then commenced another tussle, and little by little, the merchant came down to twenty-two dollars at which he sold it. It was an interesting fight to both and both were delighted with the outcome, but the merchant said to me afterward, "Wasn't he legitimate prey?" The contest was always unequal, if only the foolish buyer had allowed himself to know it. The merchant was more or less an expert, the real cost was known only to him, the kind of a dogged fight the particular customer would make he knew, and his simple expedient was to begin at a high enough price to win in the end. In any case he could finally refuse to sell.

Then weights and lengths were always short. A piece of dress goods might be marked ten yards but if it measured nine and a half yards it was readily acquiesced in, or a bolt of ribbon would be marked ten yards and be nearly a yard short. For short weight of packed coffees, teas, or other articles, the ready excuse was they dried out in the store, but of course they had never been acknowledged damp. This dishonesty was general and nothing better was expected.

There was no exchange of goods thought of in these stores. Grudgingly when it could not be refused, the merchant allowed a discount on the charge. For the customer had a ready weapon in his long-standing account. But gradually the exchange came to be demanded and conceded, at first only when another article was purchased. Some of these dishonesties are still practiced.

Adulteration of goods is still a very great evil. Not always the fault of the merchant solely, for buyers are willing to be humbugged if it is not exposed. For instance a buyer would come in for Java coffee and would be told, honestly, that it cannot be had for that price. He would retort that so-and-so sells it at that price. Then the merchant said, "It cannot be genuine Java!" But he was told it was very conceited to claim superior honesty to anyone else, so he usually ended by selling the next man "Java" at any price he wanted it. One "Christian" merchant taught his new clerk to sell in this fraudulent

way, and the boy learned it well, but he tried also to steal from the shrewd merchant, and I found him in the penitentiary. It was all right to defraud the buyer but the good man drew the line at taking anything from himself. In the country store there are many who excuse themselves for such dealings, but let us be thankful that a new race of honest men have come into some of these stores and they are doing business in Christ's spirit.

On the part of the buyer the long credits demanded are a great hardship and frequently a wrong to the merchant. There are prosperous farmers who pay only once a year. The annual settling day over, they invest all but a small surplus in an interest-bearing way. Then their accounts begin and run without a payment until next settling day. Some of these men are thoughtless about the inconvenience they cause and do not realize they are drawing interest on other people's money. Workmen like carpenters, masons, and painters on farm buildings are compelled to wait for months before being paid, the money due to them drawing interest for the good farmer.

This practice of long credits is one of the worst of country business evils. Artisans and laborers run up bills beyond their ability to pay and then shamelessly default. When the merchant complains, they go to another store. The writer was obliged in the store frequently to request some

workman's wife to purchase more moderately, for we knew it would be impossible to pay in full, and at times was compelled to refuse everything except bare necessities of life. Then she went elsewhere, and at four or five stores such people ran up great bills beyond their ability to pay for years to come. But the merchants were not blameless for they lacked the courage to unite against such practices as they now do, and they encouraged extravagant buying by these people.

In some sections the story of these evils reads like ancient history but they are fearful and lively in other places yet. On the whole there is inspiring moral progress in business. The four cardinal principles of honest selling, as one great Christian merchant* expressed them—

“ One fair price to all, plainly marked on the goods,—
Goods freely exchanged for cash,—
Full lengths and weights as indicated,—
Goods truthfully described as to quality, merits, and defects,”

have won their way to general acceptance. They are indeed “the four-leaved clover” for both buyer and seller. It is an interesting story how that merchant had to fight step by step for these principles and how many years' fight it was before victory. For the buyer there is the plain duty of paying cash at the time of purchase, or its full equivalent in a short credit for convenience only. Where these principles do not

* John Wanamaker, in advertisements.

yet prevail, the duty of Christian men, buyers and merchants, is to seek earnestly to have them adopted. There are no obstacles in the way of the country church so distressing as the familiar examples of unscrupulous merchants who are yet members, or purchasers also members of the church who do not pay their debts. Everybody knows them as they sit prominently in the church, and the most powerful appeals to the unsaved strike these "hypocrites" as a dead buffer.

Honest business must obtain also on the farm in dealing with the world. There is the dairy with its proverbial temptations to dishonesty, or equally reprehensible, its carelessness as to the perfect health of the cows, and absolute cleanliness in handling the milk. There are the horse deals, in which deacons and David Harums vie in lying; there are the "fake" fresh cows; the too-young veal; and what not of other sharp practices of innocent looking farmers. "Business is business" no longer avails to excuse the ill-gotten gains, for now that is not good business and not long profitable, fortunately.

The Christian farmer must fully bring the Kingdom of Christ into business dealings. He is called of God to serve the world's table and God is his overseer in his deepest moral consciousness. He refuses like Abraham Lincoln in the country store simply to act with "law honesty," the sort that goes to the extent of questionable dealings short of crime. He will be

strictly true to the interests of his customer, and the farmer can more easily without great financial loss be discriminately honest than the merchant in the fierce competition of great cities. But the Christian man does not fail to do righteously because it costs money, or he may lose by it. The pure money argument is the thief's or the burglar's plea.

So the Christian farmer fully recognizes his Divine call to do his service to humanity and he performs it as unto God. It is really only when men get the religious motive for business honesty and efficiency that they rise above temptation. It is a noble service to man to provide the best food for him, clean, wholesome and nourishing to his brain and body. It is the service Christ himself rendered the five thousand at one time, which the Heavenly Father bestows upon the countless millions of his children day by day, upon which he has expended marvelous wisdom and power, and which he teaches men to pray to him for daily. The new enthusiasm for farming arises from the higher conception of it rather than from its greater promise in money making. It is a vocation for the world's good, scientific, noble, of unlimited possibilities of improving its products, and with a splendid opportunity in it for a fine Christian manhood. To be honest in it in every way then becomes a matter of religion. The gospel of love to all men, the Christian principle of the brotherhood of the race, the personal re-

sponsibility of man to God, and the supreme duty in all life to grow a noble character, enter into his business, and he then becomes more than honest in all his dealings. He becomes efficient in his service to mankind in new and better ways. He improves his product perseveringly. He is alert to discover and to utilize every new method that will enhance his service to the world. He no longer separates his Sunday "service" which is simply worship, from his Monday business which is really service both to God and man. All his life becomes holy and all is done under the consciousness of God's guidance and approval.

The country store is a great social and religious opportunity. Its atmosphere may be clean and stimulating to good character. Its conversation may be upon scientific farming, latest news from all parts of the world, noble reforms, and Christian progress. The proprietor and his neighbors may make it uplifting to the boy and the young man. It may be as yet the only social center of the village or farming district, but it may be helpful in every good work. It may be made a circulating library of best and latest books as some such stores have become. A small fee for each book taken out, or an annual membership meets all expenses and gives a small profit. A whole neighborhood may be blessed by these and other helpful enterprises centering in the country store when once it does business for the King.

CHAPTER XIII.

CHRISTIAN HOME LIFE IN THE COUNTRY.

THE rapidly spreading drift to country home life is evidence enough of its superior attractiveness. The city for great business, the country for sweetest of homes is universal conviction. For all that men want of a home the country home in the suburb stands.

The Christian home of the future will be in the country. So we will seek in it the ideal comforts of the home.

1. Perfect rest for tired brains and hearts, far enough away from scenes of business to make it easy to drop its cares. But rest of the kind that recuperates energies comes only with new inspirations, new thoughts, and feelings crowding out the details of exacting business or professional life. There must be something to take up in the country as well as business anxieties to lay down, else the anxieties will not down. Absolute vacuity of mind is not possible to a waking man so long intensely active. So there are some men

who go to the country with no interest in fields, or flowers, or landscape; no exhilarating pleasure in country scenes or employments, and no concern about the neighborhood in which wife and children spend all day and the children get their environment for character. These men speedily find the city business rushing in as a flood over their hearts in spite of long distance away in their country homes. Refreshing relief comes from the substitution of the exhilarating new things of God's wonderful country and the inrush of thoughts and emotions it inspires. When the mountains and the fields and clouds stir them with some of Ruskin's awe and thrilling joy, when the violet or the strawberry come to mean somewhat of wonder they had for Faraday, when they see God as Whittier and Wordsworth do in nature, then will business cares be forgotten and the whole man be renewed in strength.

2. Time for family fellowship and loving attentions is another object of the ideal home. Only the blessed leisure of rural life permits real communion of father, mother and children. In the cities the evenings are crowded as fearfully as the days. The exciting rounds of entertainments, dinners, receptions, debutantes, breakfasts at noon, socials; of lectures, conventions, board meetings; of clubs, lodges, anniversaries; of euchre parties, private musicales, theatres and theatre parties, grand operas and dinners follow-

ing; of base-ball, football by day and celebrations of them late into the night, extend to the small hours of the morning and make the night so exhausting to the women that they spend many mornings in bed and long afternoons in naps. Home in the modern city is to many the place for long sleeps and no real life. The toiling, business-burdened husbands get out of many social excesses, for the absence of men from these functions is almost as serious as their absence from church meetings, but they must attend all too many. The little children know next to nothing of their mothers but have plenty of nurses and governesses. How they and the fathers welcome the sweet home circle of the country! There for once do they become fully acquainted with their own families. And blessed be the families who have always lived in the country.

3. Moral and spiritual replenishing for the world's struggle ought to be in the home. All men, consciously or unconsciously, do come to the home for moral strengthening. Tired to exhaustion with conflicts and fearful temptations, fighting bravely against wrong, sometimes yielding, they come home for help. To be sadly disappointed in many homes but how blessedly they are helped in the sweet Christian family circle of the suburb, or far out in the country town! That is, if they have been wise enough to begin home life as Christians and to maintain religion there.

The home life of country people who live wholly there, business and all, if it is truly Christian, will surely play a large part in Christianizing rural districts. The home is the first institution God gave to man. It began in Eden, and for ages after that the home included in itself church, school, civic center, and home in one. The father was priest, civil ruler, teacher, especially the religious head of the home. The church came later to help parents more fully to discharge their religious duties. The church, therefore, is the religious specialization of the home, and the home must ever be in the closest relation with the church because the church was organized to reinforce the home's religious life.

The home is everywhere the unit of civilization. Individuals at best are incomplete and fractional. Only when in relation to each other as members of a family and fully adjusted to those relations are individuals fully developed. Individual growth of character early reaches the social in his human nature and then grows toward others, being completed in the relations of husband, father, brother, friend. Like the trees of the country orchard the full growth of each tree, twenty feet apart from others, brings the branches of all together in interlacing above and the roots of all together in interlocking below. This is Professor Drummond's fine thought in "Evolution of Man for Others." *

* See "Ascent of Man." Drummond.

It is then the opportunity of Christian homes in the country to realize their power in village, town, or farming district and to combine for the coming of Christ's Kingdom there. It is when these homes become centers and fountains of purity, Christian character, and richest happiness that they uplift the town. A few such homes create the new atmosphere and moral tonic. The joy and cheer of these homes become infectious, and in fearsome contrast will stand the emptiness and curse of the selfish life.

The head of that Christian home in his new joy and reinvigoration forcibly proves to his business associates that godliness is profitable in the present life. He makes all other hearts hungry for the same kind of a home and for the religion which creates it.

The mothers and daughters of that home in society are an influence of immeasurable weight for nobler life. Christian life in the home counts for much more than it does confined to the church building. The sweet fruits of woman's Christian home life in beautiful character are wanted universally.

The children, too, at school and at play are unconscious missionaries advocating such homes to all. Their joy is the strength of their concrete plea for God in the home. Surely it is by simply having a truly godly home that the whole community will be influenced. And such homes will exercise a large hospitality, a warm-hearted neigh-

borliness and have personal friendships. It may be a home of moderate means, of the plodding farmer or mechanic, or even a poor man's humble cottage, but it will be just as happy and no less influential.

It is all important, however, to recognize that though the home historically, as an institution, comes first and the church then second in order of time, actually now the Christian home is always the creation of the earnest and strong church, and the home's religious life must be perennially fed by the church.

The habit of regular church-going is necessary to the continuance of the Christian home. Family worship ceases where church attendance becomes fitful, and private Bible reading and prayer soon follow. The new tides of thought so necessary to real rest from business cares and refreshing recuperation must proceed also from the church as well as from the country landscape. It is the vision of God which makes the world most wonderful to see. One or two evenings a week at the church will make the other nights at home really satisfying. And the Sabbath services intermitting the fellowship of home for a few hours return to the home in deeper communion.

The love of husband and wife that puts God first produces a better second love than any first love that leaves God out. As one husband said to his sweet wife, who as a real saint of God had

frankly told him she must always have love for God deepest, "I would rather, dear, be second in such love as yours than first in any worldly woman's love I ever knew." Religious devotion never lessens home joys but wonderfully deepens them, and there is nothing else that perpetuates home joys.

Parental obligations can be met in the country Christian home. The father has time to instruct his children in religious and moral truth and leisurely to read the Bible with them. He may develop comradeship with them which is the strongest factor in training them. There may grow real sympathy with youthful aspirations, youthful struggles, and genuine experiences in this glad comradeship in which the father keeps young and the boys become wise. For it takes time to get truly acquainted even with one's own child.

There are, however, many country homes still with few comforts for wife and children. The kitchen fireplace is the only warm spot in winter and the parlor is cold as an ice-house. Bedrooms have water frozen in them, and the boys who sleep under the roof find little heaps of snow on their bed-clothes. The general condition is cheerless, unadorned, and forbidding. No wonder the best rooms are closed also in summer to keep out the flies. In the great prosperity of farm work to-day some of the larger returns ought to be spent for love. There is no longer

any excuse for the hardships imposed upon the family. The first expenditures should be for a complete reconstruction of the home and its surroundings, in which so much of life is lived. Home on the farm is not merely a place to have supper and to sleep after midnight for a few hours. It is workshop, clubhouse, and all the world for most of the year. Love and happiness do cost something but not so much as heartaches, crimes, and excesses later in life because love was not in the home nor happiness there and the children fled elsewhere to find it.

The privations are sorest and the burdens heaviest in this kind of farm-house on the wife and mother, she whom the now thoughtlessly hard man promised to love and make happy. Former President Roosevelt says, "I want to say a special word for one who is often the very hardest worked laborer on the farm—the farmer's wife. I emphatically believe that for the great majority of women, the really indispensable industry in which they should engage is the industry of the home. But this does not mean that she should be an over-worked drudge. There is plenty that is hard and disagreeable in the necessary work of actual life and under the best circumstances, and no matter how tender and considerate the husband, the wife will have at least her full share of work and worry and anxiety; but if the man is worth his salt he will try to

take as much as possible of the burden off the shoulders of his helpmate." *

From one county of farming people, the Ladies' Home Journal (February, 1909) reports the experiences of farmers' wives gathered by an earnest little society of women anxious to improve their condition. This is only one county, and better counties and farm regions there are, but there are yet too many like these women. One thousand queries were sent out to every woman above twenty years of age asking—Were you brought up on the farm? If you are not married, would you prefer a farmer for a husband? What is the hardest part of woman's work on the farm? What do you think would greatly help a woman's work on the farm? What do you think of a "rest room" for farm women in town?

Out of 1100 letters, 956 answers were received. They were direct and straight to the point. 684 of the women had been brought up on the farm, and three-fourths of the girls said they did not want a farmer for a husband because they had

* Every farmhouse should contain Will Carleton's "Farm Ballads"—the poems "Betsy and I are Out," "Over the Hills to the Poor House," and others are full of quaint pathos, homely truths, and genuine feeling; and also "Aunt Jane of Kentucky" by Eliza Calvert Hall, a book so stirring, keen and sympathetically true to human nature in the country that every man and woman there ought to read it. Former President Roosevelt declares the chapter in it on "Sallie Ann's Experience in the Meeting" deserves to be circulated everywhere as a tract on loving home life.

seen how their mothers slaved from dawn, and before dawn to night. Their fathers thought of crops and cattle to the sacrifice of their wives. One said, "Not a horse on our farm works so long or so hard as father lets mother work." Another said, "Not a convenience has mother in her kitchen; but father has every new contrivance in his barn and he has plenty of means; land all paid for; money in bank, yet not a hired girl."

This the daughters of this farm county said. The wives say the same thing. In nearly every letter the cry is raised that the men give no consideration. One woman writes of having six small children, a farm of 360 acres all paid for, sixty cows and three hired men, and money in bank, but no hired girl though she asked for one over and over. She has no washing machine, no sewing machine, no facilities for baking or doing things, a wretched old cook stove, and not enough pans or dishes. She saved "egg money" for five years to buy a rug for the sitting-room, and her husband took it for a new gasoline engine for the barn. She saved again to get a dummy waiter to save the many trips into the cellar but her husband said it was not necessary and a sulky plow was!

Yet not a single woman complained of any kind of work as too hard; it was the never-ending, ceaseless drudgery of it all—with no consideration, no appreciation. They would not mind the work if they were only given some nec-

essary conveniences and a little appreciation. One farmer's wife cleverly put it: "A farmer's wife should have the faith of a Methodist, the cleanliness of a Baptist, the penance-spirit of a Catholic, and the belief in perseverance of a Presbyterian, to be a success on the farm." A few expressed the wish that they might occasionally hear a piece of music, or read a book, or see a picture, however cheap, but most of them only asked for the absolutely necessary utensils to work with, "arrangements at least as convenient as the arrangements of the horse and cow barns, the corn crib or the hay loft."

Here and there was a happy wife with a humane and loving husband, but the vast majority of cases were denied ordinary, human appreciation for all their slavish toil. "Give me that," said one woman, "and I'll work my nails off!" How unspeakably pathetic is all this true story of many lives in one single county of Christian America in this year of civilization. We know there are better farm homes but can it be that the majority in our country are anywhere near such a condition?

Many letters from homes were received. Some of them tell of farmers' homes fitted up with all the latest conveniences and even luxuries—telephones, piano-players, the latest books, the current magazines, and so on. These letters came from many sections and let us hope they represent the real majority of the whole. But

other letters came in comment upon the strange exhibit of that one rural county and confirmed the sad stories with similar ones of their own.

Sadly enough there are such homes in many other parts of the United States. We cannot, of course, estimate what proportion of the whole they are, but a wider inquiry instituted by the magazine * "Good Housekeeping" in co-operation with noted farm journals, *The American Agriculturist*, *Farm and Home*, *The Orange Judd Farmer*, and the *New England Homestead* brought a thousand letters in response to a series of questions. These disclose conditions of overburdened drudgery and cruel hardships, which, however, most of the wives attribute to thoughtlessness of their husbands or old notions of woman's inferior place, but this seems all too charitable a view to take of men who live to-day on New York state farms, in Massachusetts, Iowa, and California. Some farmers' wives resent the charge that their husbands are stingy, thoughtless, or cruelly exacting, and in a few cases describe excellent conditions of farm home life. But others of those who protest show their own lack of any aspirations for better things or of modern home conveniences.

Here are a few sentences from these letters: "My husband thinks the wife must always be at her post. He can go where and when he pleases without telling her, but she must be 'all atten-

* *Good Housekeeping*, July 1909, pages 41 to 43.

tion' when he returns and ask no question. I do not receive any cash as a rule." "I have had only two vacations in twenty-two years." "I do not perform any farm work except making the butter, feeding the calves, raising chickens and ducks and making garden. My husband does not believe in good social times for his wife. I have only one outing a year, an afternoon picnic." "I live in a rich farming section in Iowa, but the women here have no labor-saving machinery. It is bitterly hard for a cultured woman to slave away and find no time to read or study." "California farmers as a rule do not know they have wives. A wife is merely a machine. I have not been on a vacation for ten years." "I would like to go to town once in a while and spend money to suit myself. But my husband buys the children's and my clothes and we wear what he gets. He is not the only man of this kind in our neighborhood. I have been to town three times in ten years and have had four new best dresses, two hats and one coat. You see, I am the stay-at-home kind and the go-without kind too." This last is a New York woman, very slight build, weighs only ninety pounds, thirty years old, but does an astonishing amount of farm work, besides household cares and the care of two children. It is true, doubtless, that there are unkind husbands in cities but these farm revelations show far worse than the average.

What Horace Bushnell called the "Age of

Homespun," when the family clothing was all made in the farm home and the village home, has forever passed away. In 1810 Albert Gallatin, Secretary of the Treasury, reported to Congress investigations made in every state, and he expressed the opinion that about "two-thirds of the clothing, including hosiery and house and table linen, worn and used by the inhabitants of the United States, who do not reside in cities is the product of family manufacture." In Pennsylvania there were 997,346 yards of woolen cloth and 611,481 yards of cotton cloth made in families and only 65,326 yards of cotton cloth, and 30,666 yards of woolen cloth in factories. The proportion was about the same in all the states.* And this was in the period of transition. Earlier in colonial times it was the rare exception to wear anything in country towns but homespun. But with all that spinning and weaving, done chiefly by the "spinsters" and wives, it is doubtful whether they were burdened as farmers' wives of the rush and greed for money in our day are burdened. In any case it seems inexcusable not to furnish the wife with every possible labor-saving machine and device on farms where the farmer uses all the machinery he can to lighten his toil.

Professor Charles W. Burkett, in *Good House-keeping* (Feb. 1909), sums up some practical improvements which may be immediately made in

* "The Country Town," Anderson, pp. 12-14.

the farm home. He writes from large personal knowledge, and with tender sympathy for the hard-worked wife and daughters, but also with full appreciation of the many difficulties of the situation. He calls his suggestions:—

EIGHT STEPS IN ADVANCE.

In the first place, let music be made much of in the country home.

Second, make over the house so that the bathroom may be provided.

Third, indulge in an occasional trip or visit to near-by and distant points.

Fourth, utilize more freely all intellectual advantages, like lectures, books, papers and magazines.

Fifth, devote less time to mere manual work, substituting new conveniences and better methods for the old ways of performing household duties.

Sixth, secure a better-arranged kitchen and make water and drainage available to it.

Seventh, introduce modern comforts throughout the house, like better lights, up-to-date methods of heating, comfortable furniture, and home furnishings.

Eighth, give attention to the home labor problem, so the drudging work which so frequently falls to the woman's lot may be taken from her shoulders. This means that churning, washing, ironing, and other common tasks will be done by modern tools and appliances.

All these advances can be introduced easily, quickly, and inexpensively as compared with the costly machines the farmer now is accustomed to buy. In many modern farm-houses, Professor Burkett says, they have been introduced already. And whatever they cost, even of sacrifice, is less than the daily sacrifice of mothers and daughters.

He further suggests to the women that they can do much to secure these things by agitating for them persistently. In some cases several years will be required to attain to these improvements. The wife, too, sometimes closes her best bedrooms, her parlor, and reserves the best dishes and best tableware for the extra company. But are not husband and children the best company? Abandon these "spare" bedrooms, open up the parlor windows, and let the family have the use of all the house.

All this means, he says, that the woman must have a clear notion of her work. She needs to know how to arrange the kitchen, how to set the table, what to provide for in the living-room, how to make the home cozy and comfortable. She needs to know how to make herself attractive, to have good taste in music and pictures, and as much as she can of good cooking and housework. I never see a big, fine-looking barn with a small, ill-kept house and yard that I do not think the man who owns the place is more of a beast than a man; he certainly thinks more of his live stock than of his wife and children.

The farmer men might well form an association to look into this matter for it is their business more than the woman's on the farm. Much of it has doubtless come from the hard, struggling days when the men also toiled as hard. But now in better days let there be ex-

penditures on love, on home, on the wife and daughters. No investment will pay so wonderfully.

The home should provide sports for outdoor life in winter and summer. Country sports in winter are a delightful memory of many people in cities, and a little spent on sleds and skates will add immensely to this joyous and healthy exercise. Some farm-houses have richly added summer games of the many well-known kinds. These are as necessary for best home life and character as schools and churches. We do not want any more dull boys with all work and no play on the farm.

The new era will not disturb any good thing in the old life in the country. It will add the larger sympathies of the world-wide horizon, the daily newspaper, and the magazine, the more frequent visits to the city, the better country church and school. The decline of real homes in cities is to be compensated for by a finer type, the Christian country home, and these homes will expand influences to enthrone Christ in all country life.

CHAPTER XIV.

EDUCATIONAL FORCES CHRISTIANIZING.

THE public school is probably the most powerful of all American institutions for our national well-being. It has grown from humble beginnings of inefficiency and brief terms a year to the real free college of our cities and the great free Universities of our states. The poorest child in America has an open way to the broadest culture the world has ever known. ?

The unifying influence of the public school is solving the most serious problems like those of immigration, social castes on account of wealth, and religious bigotry.

The country public school has shared in the steady and rapid advance of all educational institutions but not fully. It lags far behind in many sections and here the Christian people of the country must take hold vigorously.

The relation of education to Christianizing is too well recognized and intimate to require more than restating here. The great commandment of

the law is to love the Lord our God with all our mind* as one duty. And Christ's influence on the world's intellectual life and its educational growth has been the real spring of modern progress in schools. The finest paintings and sculpture have been inspired by his teachings or scenes in his life, the noblest classic music has the same themes, the grandest poems have their subjects and content in the Bible, Christ's church has founded more colleges, universities, libraries, and educational research than all other agencies combined, and his people began the free schools of the world.

How then can a large educational movement be started in rural districts?

1. The schools laws of the state should be made the best possible. The minimum term, now only five months in some cases, should be raised to nine months. The short term works many serious disadvantages. It makes impossible the securing of thoroughly good teachers. Men and women of education and ability cannot live in sections where they receive employment for only five or six months in the year. So that the school is restricted to the people who reside in the place and have other business for part of the year or to unambitious, shiftless, poorly equipped teachers. But the community needs new blood, some out-

* In Deut. 6:5 from which Christ quotes it is "might" but he makes it "mind" as also the lawyer in Luke 10:27 does. How significant!

side teachers who will bring to it new standpoints, new ideas, and the infusion of a new enthusiasm.

The short term is hardest on the more eager and brightest scholars of the place. These always deserve the first consideration for the sake of the community itself. Five months may be more than enough for some farmer boys who lack aspirations or push, as it is for some city boys, but if any community is raised it will be by those at the top, by developing its best and willing people. For the leaders of the future, the coming men of business and the professions, and for the scientific farmer the future needs let every man work for a nine-months school term. Some farming districts have ten months.

Compulsory education has won its way, and is no longer an experiment. It should be adopted at once by all the states backed by the farm constituency, and strictly enforced. The farm is a child peril as well as the factory. Every teacher in the country school, like the writer in early experience and observation since, knows how many splendid boys cannot begin until near Christmas on account of farm work, and how early in March they are gone. I was haunted for years by the despairing face of a boy who had made splendid progress during the term but was cut short early by the opening of spring. It was when he told me he would be obliged to stop next week and it was no use to take the ad-

vanced work we were discussing. The greed or the supposed necessity of the father cripples the child's future for gain, as New York beggars used to cripple their child's body to arouse sympathy and get more money. Is it any less harmful because the farmer father is not so cruel but only densely stupid in crippling his child's mind? It is very shortsighted to be sure for he will lose much more money in the end than he now saves by that boy's toil. But it seems useless ever to argue the matter with such men. The state must sternly lay its hands upon them and demand the rights of the child to the thorough preparation for life which the state has provided freely. In the country compulsory education laws are more difficult to enforce because of close personal acquaintance, family relations, and lack of strong public sentiment. Here the Christian people must step in and, in love for the child as Christ loved him, compel enforcement of this law upon every one. The law is easy enough and reasonable in regarding exceptional cases!

2. Higher standards of qualifications for teachers should be steadily raised. Normal schools do not yet everywhere furnish enough graduates to supply all schools, and of course some of the graduates are not ideal teachers. Better ones are sometimes home educated as in every profession. The examinations of applicants, therefore, should be broad, sensible, and thorough. A single good teacher of fine spirit

and enthusiasm for real learning has made many a great man.

The influence of the teacher during the child's early years is immeasurable.* The mother who sadly takes her little one to the school the first day feeling that she has lost her baby, now discovers to her dismay that the teacher exerts a unique influence, beyond her own. The child corrects the mother and quotes the teacher as settling all questions. He has become the standard of learning and good taste, he is looked up to with a strange reverence, and is often warmly loved. What if the teacher can also be such a man as to become the standard of goodness to the child? His spirit so courteous, so brave for all right things, so pure in thought and act, so forceful in character that the child is forever turned in admiration to the good and the true? Is it not worth giving large attention when so much depends upon the moral character, the real gentlemanliness, and the enthusiasm for learning thoroughly and accurately in the teacher?

A wise community will call the teacher with care second to that which is given the call to a pastor, if even second to that. He is examined by the county official or state examiner as to intellectual and pedagogic ability and concerning his reputation for moral character. But the wise school board goes into other equally important

* DuBois "Point of Contact in Teaching"; "Studies in Education," Barnes.

matters. His personal manners and appearance are of vital concern. The children's habits for courtesy and cleanliness will largely reflect those of the teacher. His genuine love for teaching, for books, for nature, and for children and young people is vital to his success. He cannot impart or inspire real learning if he is a hireling for mere pay. It is the beautiful reward which one good teacher cherishes that sixteen pupils of his school became teachers, and one of them explained that it was because teaching as he did it seemed so delightful they all wanted to engage in it.

The country teacher surely should have an enthusiasm for nature study. No books he can teach will mean so rich a real culture of mind and soul as the inspiration he can give to scientific observation of trees and plants, of flowers and birds, insects, minerals, and other objects so abundantly in reach around his school. If he is a specialist in one nature study he will become an untold blessing. It is easy now to procure the needed text-books in any line of these delightful pursuits.

One early teacher inspired a large school to rapid calculating so that many of them became notable for the way they could add, multiply, or divide with speed and accuracy; another, a teacher of rhetoric, was successful in instructing several excellent authors to attain distinction. The teacher as an inspiration is even more im-

portant than his work in the strictest accuracy. His interest in the boys and girls will be tireless and after school hours he will be found with them in larger inspirations.

What pay should such a teacher be given? There is even less sentiment for an adequate salary for teachers than there is in the country for the underpaid pastor. Think of a five months' term at twenty-five dollars a month for securing a man whose influence on the character and success of the children of the town or village is beyond all estimating for good or for stunting, retarding or demoralizing! What would one of those good fathers take to permit some one to cripple his child for all time, to give him wrong conceptions of life, of his opportunity or duty? And to blast most of the fine chances he had for becoming a great man? Or, on the other hand, what will he not give to have that son or daughter receive the vision of life of a broadly educated, noble Christian gentleman, and enthusiast for learning. Yet many such Christian men will not interfere when a few men on the local school board fix the teacher's salary at a figure that can secure only incompetency, inexperience, and unambition of every kind in the teacher. There is no need to wish them ill for it, they will be paid fearfully in the dwarfing of the souls and minds of their children. One good teacher among the underpaid told his grim joke of a burglar who broke into a teacher's home to rob. He was

caught but had taken nothing and the Judge sentenced him—to an insane asylum.

3. Therefore elect the best citizens on the school board. It is astonishing that intelligent communities allow themselves to be afflicted with the slow and utterly unfit men on some of these boards. The good citizen does not go to the nominating meeting or the primary. Politicians pay their personal debts by giving the office to henchmen who in turn care nothing for it except as a stepping-stone to other offices and for the petty graft in it. There is no duty all the year so momentous in importance as to attend these elections and secure the very best citizens for the supervision of schools. The stinginess of a few men has once in a while put a man on the board expressly to stop all improvements and progress for the sake of lower taxes. The only remedy for such wrongs to the child is a vigorous agitation on the wonderful benefits of education. What remarkable illustration of it in the history of New England! “When John Cabot Lodge studied the distribution of ability in the United States he found that five great Western states produced only twenty-seven men in ninety years mentioned in American and English encyclopedias while little Massachusetts had 2,686 orators, authors, philosophers, and statesmen. The difference is almost wholly of education for the West had probably just as great natural ability.”*

* Rev. Dr. N. D. Hillis, in “A Man’s Value to Society.”

Think of what would happen if every town of less than eighteen thousand would accomplish the wonders of what education had done for Northampton, Mass., even now containing only about 18,000 people. "It has trained 114 lawyers, 112 ministers, 95 physicians, 100 educators, 7 historians, 14 authors, among them George Bancroft, John Lothrop Motley, Professor Whitney, J. G. Holland; 38 officers of the State government, 28 of the United States government including Senators and one President." This is Rev. Dr. Hillis's enumeration.

Think of what a marvelous power is a book in shaping lives. Milton says, "A good book is the precious life-blood of a master spirit to a life beyond life." Carlyle: "All that mankind has done, thought or been is lying in magic preservation in the pages of books." Well does Emerson cry out—"Give me a book, health, and a June day and I will make the pomp of kings ridiculous."

Who can estimate what a library in the country public schools is doing or might do for souls loving books like Emerson? Well does gentle Charles Lamb bid us to say "grace" reverently before reading a good book. It is encouraging to know that former President Roosevelt's Commission found the farmers deeply concerned for better schools. They want a new kind of country school that will fit their young people for country life; teaching them outdoors also, to work with

tools, how to prepare the soil, how to plant well, how to care for animals; to cook and to sew, to keep accounts, and a deep interest in nature to see its beauty as well as its profit.

State and county superintendents are already responding to these needs and working toward them. Agricultural colleges are giving brief special courses and demonstrations of better farm work. Teaching them sanitation of the farm and the home is felt to be specially important in view of the sad lack of it in many sections. This is to be practically developed in the schools.

A notable instance of this new kind of a country school is the Holly Springs High School, in Wake County, North Carolina. The school secured four acres of land and built an eight-thousand dollar house, the people liberally contributing in addition to taxes. They planted the ground in cotton the labor being done by the pupils, and made enough money to lengthen the school term two months. Another school tried the school farm and next year five schools did it with different crops, all being quite successful. Now twelve schools are planning to operate small farms and children and parents are interested up to genuine enthusiasm. The school terms are lengthened, school buildings put into splendid order, and larger schemes of education are finding ready acceptance. The children are educated not for the city but for the country life.

4. With a good board the Christian citizens will begin a large development of the schools.

There are fads in public school education in the feverish passion for progress. A principal of a large city, among others, gave a lecture recently presenting the "new ideas he was pushing," the most absurd collection of half digested notions of an extreme psycho-physical school. Such follies are always incident to real progress, and the public schools at their best to-day are far from what their able leaders desire.

But many steps of progress are unquestionably helpful and fundamental.

The country school should be graded as far as possible in scholars, teachers, and courses of study. A central High School should be provided for the district or township.

The kindergarten ought to be begun in every town for the smallest children, and the manual training school or course in several schools be in every school district. There are county school boards who have accomplished it even in sparsely settled farm districts.

The plan of wagons for hauling children from a larger territory to make possible larger schools and graded schools in one building has proven a great success. The expense is not greater than for separate small schools of twenty scholars or less, and enthusiasm, better teachers, and social development are effected. These large wagons have certain routes and the children meet them at convenient points near their homes.

4. Better school buildings will come naturally. Larger state appropriations for education should be persistently agitated for, more efficient supervision demanded, and an intelligent public opinion trained. At the foundation must be this public sentiment educated to the highest possibilities of the public school. An occasional town meeting on school problems ought to be called.

5. With educated public opinion there will be demand for systematic moral training in public schools. The study of practical ethics is imperative. The teaching of personal duty in all the relations of life, the discussion of fine moral questions, and the practical watch over character development is more important surely than intellectual training. Teachers of the better sort have long desired it and are doing it but unsystematically and with smaller results than we must have. A well planned study of morals and manners should be demanded.

The remarkable results from one single effort at such work is now before the whole world. The teaching of the effects of alcohol and narcotics on the human system was begun by law in about forty states in 1876. Only one generation of public school work on that subject has passed and we see the whole country swept by a wave of rage against the saloon and its evils, that is driving it out of many states forever, and out of large parts of all the states. There is no other agency to which this temperance wave can

be attributed so clearly as to the conviction created by the teaching in the schools.

Let there be similar moral teaching on developing a sound and pure body free from vice, and in a decade we shall have our schools morally clean instead of the fearful vices now so prevalent in many sections. The teacher talks to the parent, many have done so to the writer's knowledge, about the impure conduct of the boy and girl, but the angry parent will not believe it and the teacher knows her position will be imperilled if she goes on in that way. Nothing but a wisely graded course on this evil, and on property rights, truthfulness, fidelity, courage, gentleness, sympathy, and all other virtues will meet the moral needs of childhood in the schools.

6. Then will come the wise demand that the Bible be taught, not simply read, in the state schools. On this question on which the National Educational Association, composed of public school leaders and educators in general, has repeatedly spoken with practical unanimity for the Bible as a text-book, it is astonishing that there is absolute chaos in the public mind. By unanswerable argument it has been shown with utmost clearness that it is in no sense introducing sectarian instruction, it is no union of church and state, but that the Bible is essential to a complete education. Think of the finest literature, "the literature both of power and of beautiful form," not studied at all in our schools; of the profound-

est and most practical philosophy of life and moral teaching which is "a voice and not an echo" neglected; and of the book fundamental to all modern progress driven out of the schools of a nation, declared by the United States Supreme Court to be a Christian nation! Ruskin and Carlyle and Daniel Webster declared they got the matchless style of their English from the Bible. Even Huxley and Tyndall, free thinkers though they are, urge it for all schools. But in our country the enemies of the Bible are bold and insistent and its friends divided, uninformed, and undecided. In the cities certain elements are already in control against the Bible in the schools, and the rural sections must swing us back to good sense in the Bible's place in education. Let every good citizen in country places study this question, agitate, demand, put the Bible into the schools.

7. The country church may greatly aid the public schools. It is the excellent custom of some pastors to preach a sermon on public schools at the beginning of the term. They seek to arouse greater respect for the teacher, urge some current improvements, and in general a regular attendance and best work.

8. Many communities have a college in addition to public schools or some fine preparatory academy. These are usually struggling for very existence, the village or town blind to their extraordinary opportunity. A few earnest citizens

can rally the farmers and neighbors to the support of the school or college, and they will have their reward as is usual in such agitation in the fine effect upon their own children. Call a public meeting to arouse interest in the college. Urge the young people to go. It will mean a new era for the entire region. Pastors and Sunday-school superintendents may do a great service by standing for a college education for all the young people. Sometimes this has been the greatest work of an earnest pastor that he was the means of persuading some future great man to enter college. Professor Butterfield of the Massachusetts Agricultural College, a member of the National Commission on Country Life, says, "Under co-operation comes the idea of getting country people to work together in developing organizations for educational purposes, social purposes, and business purposes. The Grange is one of the best examples of this co-operation. Education needs attention in the improvement of the country schools, the placing of agriculture in the curriculum, better high school facilities, the establishment of more complete agricultural colleges, and more encouragement of extension work—lectures and demonstrations." He says also, "The country church must play an increasingly larger part in the development of country life."

The farmer is beginning to respond to these educational efforts. We give one illustration of

many in the states. The most surprising results have come in Wisconsin where the great state University is projecting many educational advantages for farmers. Mr. Lincoln Steffens, (*American Magazine*, February, 1909) tells of one family from the country of which the son was on a "Varsity team," the daughter in the college of Letters and Science, and the father and mother came to Madison in the winter, the one to attend the "Housekeepers' Conference" in the College of Agriculture, and the other the Farmers' Course of study, a ten-day practical but thoroughly scientific study of improving, better apparatus, experimentation in grain, and the chemistry of dairying. Three hundred and ninety-three farmers in 1907 took a longer special course on farming and have stirred every neighborhood in the state with their practical results. A new enthusiasm for farm work has come and boys stay on it instead of going to the cities. The University's special investigation into oat smut has saved five millions a year, and whole sections of the state have planted the better seeds for other grains and increased output and profits fifty to one hundred per cent.; the average increase per acre of corn rose from 27 to 41 bushels, 15,000,000 bushels a year worth \$6,000,000.

Now Farmers' Institutes cover that state with lectures and demonstrations by University experts from two to five days and these lead to the

University's short course at Madison begun in 1903. The time for it is two weeks in dead of winter when no work is doing on the farm. The first year 175 farmers came; second year, 227; then the succeeding years, 401, 601, 701, and now 2,000 are expected. One farmer said, "Great stuff we're getting here, ain't it?" and then he told of some values of it. Two hundred Farmers' Institutes are now supported by the state. All this is new life of intellectual stimulus on the farm, as one story illustrates. In the little town of Cottage Grove lives a boy named Mellish. He lives with his mother, sister and grandfather on a forty-acre farm which is their support. The boy is so deeply interested in astronomy that he constructed a telescope, and after his day's work searches the sky with it. In 1907 he discovered two of the seven or eight comets that were found by the astronomers of the world. He continues to work on the farm and is taking the University correspondence course in Mathematics. The University going out found that boy and is looking for others like him.

But Wisconsin is only a little in the lead of what all the states are doing for the farmer, for his home, and for his boys and girls.* During 1906-7 Farmers' Institutes were held in all the

* See Report of Hon. John Hamilton, Director of Farmers' Institutes in the United States Dept. of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., for 1907.

states excepting Nevada and Texas, and in all the territories excepting Alaska and Porto Rico. Forty-four states report attendance 1,596,877, an increase over previous year of 297,705. The number of Institutes in 1907 was 3,927, a gain of 406, an average attendance for each session of the one-day, two-day, and three-day Institutes of 138.8, an increase of 24.8 over the average session of 1906. The amount spent by the states on these Institutes was \$284,450. Fourteen states held other Institutes to the number of 125; five states ran railroad specials, two states held field demonstrations with an attendance of 1000.

Eleven states held women's Institutes in which domestic economy and farm homes were discussed in addition to technical crops; eight states report 363 sessions of boys' and girls' Institutes; and one a summer school for farmers, held in 1906, for seven days, with an attendance of 405, at which ten to twelve hours' instruction was given each day. In Kansas 2,794 boys engaged in corn contests in 40 counties, 250 girls were listed in contests in growing of flowers, and 150 in contests in home gardening. In Indiana eight summer Institutes were held specially for farmers' wives and children, and in Illinois 60 out of 102 counties were represented at the two weeks' short course in winter at the University at Champaign by winners in corn-judging and bread-judging contests. The teaching force actually employed by the states in these Institutes

was 1,084. Of these, 386 were from the agricultural colleges, 605 hold university or college degrees, and many of the others were practical farmers highly successful in specialities and some of them exceedingly attractive teachers.

All these we have given in detail to prove beyond a doubt that these Institutes are of high character intellectually and are growing in popular power wonderfully. But it is estimated that probably only one in ten of our enormous farming population has yet been reached by their helpfulness. We are therefore recording the beginnings of new history which will become a peaceful revolution in our farming conditions.

For Pennsylvania,* one of the states which issues an annual report of this educational movement for farmers, there are seventy lecturers employed for nearly three months in winter. They held 379 institutes, generally two-day sessions, and talked on from three to eleven subjects each, most of the subjects being upon technical crop problems and methods of cultivation, but many also of a general nature touching the welfare of the farm home and environment. Instruction trains stopping at many points for a few hours were a unique feature of this work.

All this instruction aims at thoroughly scientific investigation and discussion. It is strenuously practical and produces results that can be measured in better and larger crops, and improved

* See Penna. State Bulletin of Farmers' Institutes, 1908.

material conditions. But great as this movement has become it is only one phase of the Progress of Agricultural Education.* "Agriculture is recognized as a teachable subject having educational value" not only in Cornell University, in Wisconsin University, but in Columbia, Clark, and others. The National Education Association is considering it as a subject for the regular public school course, and the pioneer county to adopt it in the public school organization is Cecil County, Maryland. Cecil County opened its Agricultural High School, Nov. 5, 1906, in a small building with nine acres of land. Thirty-eight pupils were enrolled the first day and fifty-one for the year. Others in different states are rapidly following.

Gardens for planting vegetables and flowers by public school children have been in operation, rapidly spreading over the country. Seeds for 75,500 school gardens were sent out by the Department at Washington in a single year.

In his first message to the Sixtieth Congress, Theodore Roosevelt said, "The farmer must not lose his independence, his initiative, his rugged self-reliance, yet he must learn to work in the heartiest co-operation with his fellows, exactly as the business man has learned to work; and he must prepare to use to constantly better advan-

* See Dept. of Agriculture's Reports in special bulletins "Reports of Progress of Agricultural Education" for 1906, and for 1907.

tage the knowledge that can be obtained from agricultural colleges, while he must insist upon a practical curriculum in the schools in which his children are taught. It should be one of our prime objects to put both the farmer and the mechanic on a higher plane of efficiency and reward, so as to increase their effectiveness in the economic world and therefore the dignity, the remuneration, and the power of their positions in the social world."

The Grange, the well-known secret association of farmers, is again energetically and successfully organizing the farmers for mutual help and large educational movements for improving the farm and home. The popular impression that the Grange is dead, or not now "a force of consequence" is a mistake. According to President Butterfield, the Grange has accomplished more for agriculture than has any other farm organization. It has more real influence than it has ever had before; and it is more nearly a national farmers' organization than any other in existence to-day."*

The Pennsylvania Secretary, of Agriculture reports its growth in that State (Letter to author, June, 1909). The Grange was organized by Mr. O. H. Kelley in 1867. In 1873 there were 20,000 Granges in 28 States comprising 750,000 members. But from 1880 to 1890 the Grange de-

* Compare President Butterfield, "Chapters in Rural Progress," p. 138.

clined, but since 1890 there has been wide-spread revival of interest in it. In five leading states, New York, Pennsylvania, Maine, New Hampshire, Michigan, the total number of Granges increased, (1900-1905) 492 and in membership 81,000. The full participation of women in the Grange, the broad educational and social plans of the organization, its co-operative business plans, legislative influencing, and general enthusiasm for better rural conditions render it a large factor of promise for the future.

The Interstate Commerce Commission in one of its reports to Congress gives a complete list of Agricultural Associations, local, state, and national. The number of such co-operative associations of all kinds is fully twelve thousand,* of which the Grange, the Farmers' Union, Farmers' Educational and Co-operative Union, and the American Society of Equity are found in several states. Many states have three hundred associations, a few nearly a thousand of them. Yet so great is the number of farmers and so widely scattered are they in America that as yet only a small proportion of them are organized. The Farmers' Union and the Grange promise most for national spread of co-operative power.

The leaders of the Grange have been wise in using its great influence to further legislation by Congress and the states for the benefit of agricultural interests. They urge "the mental,

* Interstate Commerce Commission, Washington, 1907.

moral, and social development of the farmer and his family," as the most important of all. They are studying national affairs and national issues in an intelligent and thorough-going way that promises helpful influence for them in a right solution. On good roads, the conservation of natural resources so auspiciously promoted by former President Roosevelt, on Postal Savings Banks and Parcels Post, and on other vital questions they are untiring in agitation and concentration of influence. They claim to have been largely influential in securing many important laws in the recent past, and they do not too strongly urge the importance of agriculture in these striking words; * "The prosperity of agriculture is the basis of prosperity in other industries. Immense manufacturing plants and great transportation companies are dependent upon agriculture for business and prosperity. What contributes to the promotion of agriculture contributes to the highest development of a nation."

Farmers have been very indifferent to organization. Their natural independence and isolation have been against submission to set regulations and to social obligations. But the taste of united power and the delights of fellowship are winning them. The purposes of the Grange are lofty and broad for Christian and moral principles, and it is to be hoped that its membership

* See address of N. J. Bachelder, Master National Grange, 1908.

will soon increase from about a million to embrace the entire ten millions of farm workers and also their wives, for the Grange is the most hospitable of all organizations to woman.

CHAPTER XV.

SOCIAL VILLAGE CULTURE FOR CHRIST.

THE town, the village, and the farming region are indeed free in social life, but unrestraint and unconventionality are not necessarily ideal. The barriers of city castes are down, but the guards that mean true modesty, tender thoughtfulness, and noblest friendships may not yet be erected. The country freedom is not wholly an advantage. One pastor of profound thoughtfulness in a town speaks of "the evil of people knowing too much of each other," of the consequent idle gossip incessantly flowing, and the petty meannesses developed. He means, of course, that they dwell too largely upon trifling matters of each others' lives which they freely make it their business to investigate and disseminate.

This pastor sees the social ailment but is his diagnosis accurate? It may be rather knowing too little of the real man or woman in the folly of making so much of his trifling faults and weaknesses. The man from the country goes to

the city, becomes famous, and returns a great man to the astonishment of his neighbors. Jesus himself lived in a small town of this sort and was without honor there, and even when he returned as the wonder-working prophet, about whom the whole nation was talking, his neighbors were disgusted at his claims and drove him out. Was it that they knew too much of him? Was it not rather because they knew him only as the carpenter going to his daily toil, and as Joseph's son with James and Joses, very ordinary fellows, as his brothers, and his sisters, good young women, doubtless, but with no special gifts or promise? And Jesus himself had lived just an ordinary life since childhood, had never in Nazareth performed a miracle, nor made a public address, not anything different from Joseph or his brothers or sisters.

Of course they did not know of his many trips to the hills and his all-night prayers with God; they did not remember his famous interview with the doctors in the Temple at Jerusalem nearly twenty years before, and probably that was the only such interview; they knew nothing of what was in his heart, or the plans of the kingdom growing in his mind, nor the wonderful teachings he was preparing in those long years. How very little they knew of him!

The stories of Jesus and the people of Nazareth, of David and his brothers and father who did not know him, and of Joseph and his

family, are true to the social life of the village and town, where the gossiping people know each other only by surface characteristics. That is sure to be the case where there is such freedom of tongue with personal affairs. Why do not country people know each other fully? By the inevitable consequence that they fear to reveal the deeper and finer feelings and aspirations of their souls to such rude handling. The country boy with exalted ideals hides them even from his mother, for she would tell them and after she left the neighbors would laugh and jeer over them.

How unfair the scales upon which they weigh their neighbors! "Bill" Jones of the village to-day is despised because the uncle of his grandfather on his mother's side was a horse thief, or at least was once accused of stealing a horse, though some one argued in behalf of Bill that the horse had only wandered away and returned to the stable. But village memories of such transactions are long on the evil side and short on the other. Bill himself was not of a high order of good character and "would probably not be above stealing a horse himself if he had a chance," so that the ancient suspicion was kept alive against him. Did Bill ever steal? "Not that anybody ever found out," nothing worse than apples from the orchards and that is not stealing there. And worst of all, Bill can never do a good deed, a really good deed, without hav-

ing that ugly old story also told while the good deed is mentioned.

Sue Smith is shunned and talked about because she wants to go to college though she comes from that poor farm hand's family in the little tenant house. "The upstart! thinks herself better than other folks!" The village declares it would be better for her to learn how to wash and iron well, which by the way she can do, and the village heard from some one, they can't say who said it and they would not swear to it, that Sue does not like washing over much. Of course no one else of the gossiping women likes it over much but that is against Sue, not against them.

So the country district judges its neighbors with petty unfairness. It may not be they condemn people for being poor, for they cannot in self-defense set up such a standard. Nor for lack of college diploma for the same reason, nor of title or distinguished family. The city distinctions are impossible at the cross-roads. But the village and town have others at hand just as unreasonable. And often, just as in the city, people are criticized for the things in which they have done better than others, and condemned for having higher aspirations than the critics have.

Some country towns have a local humorist or buffoon, who can turn to ridicule the deeper and finer things of his more prosperous and abler neighbors. The whole town is now retailing his cruel thrusts and is convulsed with laughter over

the funny thing about so and so. Who would expose anything precious he could conceal in that place to such rude and unappreciative beholders? So the people of the little town seldom come to know the best of their neighbor's spirit and character. They know not too much but too little of each other.

Here is the opportunity of the Christian pastor and his good people. They must create the new atmosphere in which the delicate plants of beautiful traits of character can grow. They must think on the things that are noble and true and exalted, and compel respect for these things. They must protect the modest young girl who reaches for higher things from the cruel malice and envy of others, and the splendid young boy from the reiteration of the sins or supposed sins of a great-grandfather's unfortunate life.

Remember further that the little village of the old type has no large interests like those of the city, nor the great movements of the wide world to discuss. Everything is small there and intensely personal in its aspects. So the gossip is wholly about individuals and the petty circumstances of such quiet lives. Such things must be magnified and grossly exaggerated to be worth talking about even there, and thus the habit of adding much that is pure imagination and much that is wholly rumor grows apace, and mountains are made of mole-hills in this cruel and crushing analysis of motives, words

and actions of their neighbors, of whom often, as we have seen, really very little is known. Worse still, if instead of a sort of friendly interest there is felt toward the persons a jealousy, or envy, or resentment of some fancied or real wrong.

The new era of good roads, electric cars, telephone, and daily city newspaper is working a revolution in the town and cross-roads, and its first change is to furnish great topics for conversation. The small affairs of the next neighbor sink out of sight and the villagers are discussing the vast transformation of China, the earthquake in Sicily, and the great reforms of America. This new era leaves the old social freedom undisturbed but infuses new ideals. It will develop the fellowship of noble purposes and higher aspirations in country places.

Even before the new era arrives a few Christian families may accomplish a social uplift. This requires a common purpose to do so in these families and a resolute campaign. It will be a matter of setting a noble example of true neighborliness, of kindly, sympathetic, confidential friendships and frowning upon gossip. A strict line drawn around the privacy of homes and a cultured courtesy in speaking of each other. It will set a standard of Christian social life, and setting the standard of social intercourse is always the initiative of the better life. There will often be necessary the courteous silence when small affairs of personal life are gossiped, or the

early withdrawal from the group. A wise word from the Scriptures is most effective, "Judge not that ye be not judged."

But chiefly it will consist in the creation of an atmosphere in which the gentler and wiser discussions can flourish. The happy homes of the Christian families, their large hospitality to each other and to friends, and their own Christlike spirit will make the atmosphere. And thus by example, standard, and atmosphere the day of petty things will end and the world come into the horizon of the cross-roads.

The examples, even a few of them, of girls beautifully modest in relation to young men, forbidding the rude freedom of kisses by fine dignity, and the small love talk will impress the giddy set. One such splendid young woman has influenced a whole village. And a few young men, pure in thought and word, chivalric in courtesy to all women, yet genial and social, will turn the tide to genuine refinement.

These Christian people should cultivate the godly grace of hospitality. There is serious loss to city Christian life in the virtual abandonment of any general hospitality in the Churches. We need not here show how much may yet be done to revive it in the city, but in the country the perplexing difficulties of city homes in regard to entertaining friends at meals or for the night do not exist. And there is a fellowship around a table which is unique. It seems divinely or-

dained that eating together opens hearts and promotes deep friendships.

Confidential friendships are the most heavenly enjoyment on earth and the best one soul can give another. If it becomes a fellowship of partnership in every good work it will be closest of all union of heart. For even in relation to God there is a closer fellowship than that of sonship with him. It is when the Christian enters upon the work of God in co-operation with him, for partnership with God is more wonderful still.

With such social life in the country, "John" will not "Quit the Farm" at all. It is James Whitcomb Riley's sweet poem that tells of John's return in colloquial:—

"And so I turnt and looked around, some one riz up and
leant
And put his arms round Mother's neck, and laughed in low
content.
'It's me,' he says, 'your fool-boy John, come back to shake
your hand;
Set down with you, and talk with you, and make you under-
stand
How dearer yet than all the world is this old home that we
Will spend Thanksgivin in fer life—jest Mother, you and
me!'"

There are the sweet kinships of large family life, the life-long friendships, and the only real home life in the world.

CHAPTER XVI.

VILLAGE IMPROVEMENT.

A SIGNAL advance in Christian civilization such as makes Christian principles more largely to control in life, is being accomplished by Village Improvement Associations. It is a popular movement almost everywhere in villages and small towns, and its lines of good work radiate in many directions.

This association devotes itself to the physical improvement of the place, but this leads to much that is related to character and even to Christian life, as practical experience has demonstrated.

1. The beautifying of homes and their surroundings. In many a cross-roads village the houses are unsightly and unpainted, dilapidated buildings and sheds abound, and a general appearance of shabbiness and neglect everywhere. The first suggestion of the association is to paint the houses as soon as possible, remove the rubbish, and clean up generally. It surprises everybody what a change can be effected with small

expense. The doors and the windows are made more attractive and the approaches to the house cleaned and repaired.

Then the surroundings of homes are taken in hand. Trees are planted in artistic order, old trees trimmed, or straightened. Flowers are studied and finer modern plants are substituted for the scrawny, half-wild, and rude "posies" of the grandmothers so amusing to visitors. Flower beds are planned for fine effects. Some village homes have the possibility of a fine lawn and this is graded, walks arranged to be artistic, and general landscape effects are considered. Old fences are removed entirely where possible, cattle and stock not permitted to roam, and new fences erected when needed, or the old repaired and repainted. The association has often in a few years produced a transformation of the place in which every one becomes enthusiastically interested, and the few aged or poor people unable of themselves to keep pace with the rest are kindly assisted by association funds. It is important manifestly to secure the membership of every one who can possibly be persuaded to join, at the start. Then in the association meetings all suggestions can be discussed and comfortably adopted, and no criticism of particular houses be necessary.

2. Then comes the removal of unsightly and unpleasant things of a larger character, such as tumble-down sheds, which may be seen in many

a country place, lingering for years probably unused. The owner is often a non-resident and no one concerns himself about it. The association gets it removed. And there is an ancient rubbish heap near the old road. Everybody dumped upon it for years, but now the old tin cans, the dirty heaps of paper cannot be endured. The owner of the ground is appealed to courteously and he clears it away or is assisted by the association. Tottering fences all along the highways seem to get a new life and begin to straighten to the new dignity and beauty that has come over the town. The rotting old tree with one branch split into the trunk, unsymmetrical and dead, must come down. In many particulars the man-made town gets into harmony with God-made Nature and both look more attractive to all eyes. Especially upon young and impressible minds are these changes helpful. A new love of home and self-respect of immense value is promoted.

3. General esthetic culture comes rapidly with these improvements. The love of beauty is clearly related to the good, though it can never be a substitute for it. But there is the beauty of holiness, the higher attraction the good will possess when it is clothed in its glorious appropriateness. So the village will soon seek for pictures and homes beautified without will develop new attractiveness within. The association now gives art lectures occasionally and may plan an "Art

Week" with borrowed pictures from the best homes, possibly interesting some city art dealer to exhibit a few moderately priced good pieces and pictures. The slumbering genius of some village Raphael or Murillo is awakened and a new era is steadily coming to young and old that makes life immensely more interesting and worth while.

Very often a village singing-school follows, which grows into a choral society and a band of instrumentalists. The singing-school may be made a very valuable adjunct to general culture. It will be a social gathering of the better sort. It will require tactful government to prevent relapse into rude, old-time manners, but real refinement is also contagious and the association leaders can create the "atmosphere." In England there are rural sections which have surprising results from village choral societies. Classic productions are rendered by them creditably, and great oratorios like "Elijah," and "The Messiah" are annually produced. The wonderful work in music of the Welsh towns and villages is also well known, and much of this is being reproduced by Welsh communities now in America in the coal regions. Can a thoughtful man conceive the new life the village will acquire under the stimulus of such a choral society? And the new worship possible in the churches, the entertainments, the social delights, and the character building of it all?

Young people will be brought together under good auspices in the singing-school. Many happy marriages will result from it, not the least of its benefits. For it is one of the serious problems of modern society, which sociologists have scarcely begun to study, how to bring young men and young women together in a place free enough to admit of thorough acquaintance and refined enough to promote the noblest mutual respect, so that wise choice of husband or wife may be possible with adequate knowledge of each other's temperament, character, and abilities. The study of the divorce evil is imperative, but if more really sensible attention were given to the beginnings of planning for marriages, there would be little need of agonizing discussions of divorce. We are almost wholly blind to the duty of providing these good beginnings and of instructing young people upon marriage responsibilities. Prevention here is far better than cure.

4. The preservation of historic spots and relics is a splendid work for the association. Almost every village has some "history" of value, some of them are allowing famous relics or supremely important events to be unnoted and unmarked. It is a great day for all the country round when the little monument or artistic marker of the momentous event is dedicated. Every such opportunity is a prize for village improvement.

Sometimes the spot is simply a relic of some prominent early citizen of the village, not connected with any matter of general importance. Or it may be a building of some significance in local history. But it should be earnestly worked up. An old citizen of fine character is a valuable asset and deserves special honor. The village is elevating itself when it pays tribute to its best men and women.

5. The approaches to a town may be greatly improved by the association. One town constructed solid roads three miles in every direction beyond its borders.* It was an excellent business proposition, for it has drawn farmer buyers to the town permanently. Such a road between two towns might be built by them jointly. These towns would develop improvements rapidly.

So railroad accommodations may be made betted by united effort. There are towns that have missed their chance forever by refusing concessions of a very reasonable character when a new railroad route was being planned. Some narrow-minded citizen made exorbitant demands for right-of-way needed, and frequently several citizens thus block the way. A little reasoning with these men by fellow citizens in most cases would have secured the compromise and brought the railroad to their doors. But no such effort was made, and now the unfortunate village stands

* Federalsburg, Maryland.

miles away from the stream of business the railroad has brought. And all the blessings of Christian civilization the railroad has come to signify are lost to that place. Its best young men go to railroad towns, and its churches, business and home life dwindle year after year.

So with telegraph and telephone facilities for a town. A few hours' travel from a great American city brings one to where the telegraph and telephone are twenty miles away. The boat that landed us has gone and a sense of indescribable isolation from loved ones and other-world consciousness creeps over the soul. We are accustomed to city life for years, with a 'phone on the desk at hand, a telegraph messenger boy on call, six mail deliveries a day, and how strangely distressing is this two-day loneliness with no letter, not a word from home, not a daily paper known, and twenty miles drive through sandy roads, the horse making four miles an hour to connect with real life! The effect on the visitor there is paralyzing, the paralysis of his fellowship with the world and with his loved ones. It is not paralyzing to the local inhabitants, for they are already dead to such broader life; not a daily paper ever comes to that place, nor a good weekly, and I could not find the monthly magazine, almost everywhere else crowding the world. The people have little to do for several months, they sleep most of the day, some of them

late through the morning and all of them early at night. There are few books in the place.

Think of the transformation of a village like that by a daily mail bringing daily newspapers widely read; by the telephone, telling of every happening an hour afterward; by telegraph and electric railways. Think of the moral effects, the character influences, the larger religious possibilities when this unconnected sleeping town is brought into the circle of Christian civilization by the helping hands of steel and electricity. It is a Christly act of the village association to reach out the steel hands and clasp them home, just as it is unquestionably Divine Providence which brought these forces of civilization.

6. The Village Improvement Association will wisely foster business pride. The results of arousing local merchants and professional men are far-reaching in one town of many we might name. Every store is made more attractive, some of the newer ones have fine show windows that approach the taste and beauty of city shops. There is friendly competition to exhibit the finest display of goods, which in turn is rewarded by purchasers from other towns and for miles around. This increase of income leads to a fine bank, one of the sights shown with real pride to a visitor. The cashier assures the visitor the village bank pays. The churches show the prosperity of the town in a material beautifying and enlargement, and here too is the benefit of the approaches to

the town strongly seen. So closely do the good things of life hang together. The little town has become a Garden of Eden in physical attractiveness, and in its people a refined and sympathetic Christian character is developed.

There is surely no environment on earth so adapted to produce noble character as the town morally governed by the Improvement Association. So far as environment can modify or produce character the best elements are there. And there the springs of good character are perennially fresh and life-giving. The good father and mother, the happy home, the excellent school, the quiet for meditation, the deep sweet friendship, all are there. The influence of Nature in beautiful form, the church has its best opportunity, and no village improvement will overshadow the church spire nor any bells ring so sweetly as hers in the ears of young and old.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE VILLAGE LITERARY SOCIETY.

“THE average American,” says a humorist, “loves a public debate as he does a dog fight. He bets in his own mind on one of the combatants, and sic, sics him on to win regardless of the merits of the question. It is not a place to secure a good decision of an important matter.” A very able preacher on doctrinal questions persistently refused to accept a challenge to a public discussion for the same reason that the atmosphere was unfavorable to best results. Unquestionably the personal influence of the debaters has large weight difficult to separate in a judicial settlement of the issue, but so is the personal equation large in his one-sided pulpit utterances, and in all human thinking and speaking. And it is well known that the gravest issues involving property and life are determined in our courts after the most impassioned debate between advocates on each side.

The astronomer has learned scientifically to

determine the personal factor in observations of the stars, and actually has on record the fraction of time marking the "personal equation" of all prominent observers. He knows how to eliminate it from the result and to make that almost perfect. And practically the thoughtful hearer knows the peculiar bias or temperament of a speaker he has heard a few times, and he also either consciously or unconsciously allows for that. The intense feelings aroused by the debate make for greater mental activity and compensate for the partisan attitudes taken.

The Village Literary Society, however, which has been so useful in many places, has far more to commend it than its success in finally settling profound questions before it. For one good thing, the agitation of these questions by sound arguments, or arguments of mere sound, either, starts thinking in all who participate and it is thinking which blesses when on great questions.

The organization of the literary society, whose work impressed itself on the village, was very simple. It was effected by representative citizens, members of different Churches and outsiders, and the usual officers were elected who formed the executive to arrange programs, secure speakers, and manage the meetings. Meetings in one case were held weekly and in another bi-weekly on Saturday nights. The places, the school building and a public hall, were thought more suitable for free debate than a

church, though nothing actually occurred which the people would have considered improper in a church. The interest and attendance took in the entire village concerned and grew steadily to large crowds. Being held on Saturday evenings it did not interfere with any series of religious meetings and was not interrupted by them.

The advantages were immediate. The topics ran at once into ethical questions and the pastors, school teachers, and physicians were usually the leading talkers. But both villages had intelligent business men who participated, and some farmers. Young people found it a good social meeting-place and were started vigorously to think on great questions of better living. There was not the pride of personal opinion nor the contest to win which had been feared, but in most instances an evident sincerity in seeking the truth.

Many literary, industrial, political, and social questions were introduced either into debates or were referred to some one for investigation. The reports on these questions, of course, differed greatly in value but none of them were without helpfulness. The current of village thought was guided into higher channels than personal gossip and this showed itself in many significant ways. The churches felt the deeper thoughtfulness in their services.

The referred question on several occasions

was of extraordinary interest. When it was given to some one specially informed, as in the case of a medico-ethical subject to an able Christian physician, the paper resulting was of unusual value. And the possibilities of such helpful investigation for the general public grew in the course of the season.

The society furnished opportunity for entertainments of the better sort and for an instructive popular lecture under auspices that insured an audience. It gave the village, also, a ready forum for current local agitation of needed improvements and reform of abuses. The weight of public opinion was brought directly to bear upon the good or the evil concerned. For this alone it was well worth maintaining.

The educational and moral reform possibilities of the Literary Society were a matter of frequent consideration by the leaders, and it was the general conviction that no more beneficial movement could be developed than the regular meetings for discussion.

Such a society can be made a valuable adjunct to the Village Improvement Association and might be allied with that movement, though if good officers could be secured for a separate organization it would be better to have each association devote its energies to its own work. Many citizens would naturally belong to both. The leaders of each would become specialists for their own movement.

What questions could be helpful to the society? We suggest a few as illustrations of what may be thought profitable:

1. Living and just wages are such that the father himself can support the family.

2. Honest work alone has the right to full wages.

3. Workingmen's unions are beneficial.

4. Marriages for money or titles are sinful.

5. Parents should have more to do with their children's choice in marriage.

6. Children have certain inalienable rights.

7. Every voter should be fined for not voting.

8. The State should provide some educational advantages to adults.

9. Necessity is never an excuse for sin.

10. Gluttony is as sinful as drunkenness.

11. Tempting others to sin is the worst of sins.

12. How far is Socialism really Christian?

In two villages in which the writer actually organized these literary societies and actively participated, it was plain to every one that far more than intellectual benefit accrued. Socially there was a vast improvement, for the meetings had become a social center, and the people came to know their neighbors more than superficially. Many a young man surprised his friends by his able thinking and in the finer traits of character he manifested in one way or another.

Moral reforms received a new hospitality in

many minds and hearts. The whole town was stirred by some of the debates, and for the children and young people it was plainly an education in morals that neither the church, nor the home, nor school was furnishing there. There is no exercise of conscience, except in noble action, so helpful as in discriminating the factors of a moral question and earnestly discussing it. There was genuine character building in these meetings.

As one of the outside movements for propagating Christian principles in rural districts it ranks next to the church. The mission of spreading the light, extending the influence of Christian ideals, and for arousing enthusiasm for their realization is given to good men, as citizens outside of the church and we have now set forth the various ways in which this can be effectively done in country places.

Fortunately, we are not now merely in the realm of theories, important as theories always are in further progress. We have notable instances of a typical character where all the plans have been more or less fully worked out and successful. All over America there is a rise of Christian citizenship which is alert to exercise its rights and opportunities for Christian civilization. It has developed little centers of power which show possibilities for all other country places.

This outside light and overspreading influence

of Christianity in the world is not in rivalry with the church but is a complement to her work, the other hemisphere of the full gospel propaganda. It must be fostered by the church in her teaching and she must actively train workers to do this bringing of the Kingdom of Christ into all human activity.

The church, however, has her specific mission in the consummation of the Kingdom and this we now proceed to investigate, but always confined to our problem of the rural Christendom.

SECTION III.

THE CHURCH FOR THE KING-
DOM OF CHRIST IN RURAL
CHRISTIANIZING.



CHAPTER XVIII.

THE PLACE AND POWER OF THE LOCAL CHURCH.

THE local church is both the beginning and the finishing workshop of Christianity. It is the point of contact with the individual soul, the place where the actual evangelizing, teaching, regenerating, and training of men must be done. It is the source of supplies for all of Christ's work, whether of men, money, or spiritual power. It should surely be the strongest and most effective of the wheel within wheels of organized Christianity.

But at present it is the general denominational organization that has modern life and spirit and not these local churches. The benevolent societies and boards of the church are finely constituted, aggressive, and resourceful; the educational general movements are admirable; the supervision by assemblies, conferences, synods and other bodies is thorough and inspiring. Yet all these general church movements are in crises of sadly inadequate contributions of money.

Missions at home and abroad, larger beneficences of all kinds are halted. Appeals are made to pastors desperately but the pastor seems to be unable to advance the offerings except so slowly as to seriously retard all the work. Where is the crisis? It is plainly in the local church which is the unit of all power for the coming of Christ's kingdom. At a time when America is enormously wealthy and prosperity is overwhelming the nation, a really small proportion of the annual increase, which is crowding Christian hands to hold, cannot be gotten for the world-wide and nation-wide movements of the church! A few drops from the cup which God is making to run over would satisfy missions and all other work of a general character at its present stages. But these drops are not dropping.

Because in city, town, and country place the local church is now largely an unworked asset of Christendom. Its financial possibilities are barely touched, its important function of discovering able workers and training them is very feebly exercised, its local influence and immediate results in conversions are pitifully undeveloped and meager. It is not that the local church has failed. The condition is that of an unworked and undeveloped field of abundant resources.

Pastors all over the country in more than thirty states of the Union give me the following general figures, or that part of them which

official year books do not cover. They exhibit this unworked and inactive local church, not so discouraging as it ought to be stirring to consider adequate measures at once for sending new wires into every part of it to thrill into life and splendid response all these idle resources to be reached and used for the Kingdom of Christ. Whenever even a beginning in a modern business spirit and thoroughness has been made in some local church the results are surprising. It is truly an unworked field in large part but it is exceedingly rich. Where are the undeveloped parts?

1. One-half of the members of the great majority of churches have no church-going habit. They attend services very seldom. One-half of Christ's army are in their tents while the battle is going on. A large and regular attendance is necessary to unity, power, progress. All the church buildings in America are probably not large enough to hold at one time all the members of these churches. They could be brought out by earnest organization and work. Who can measure the new power?

2. Two-thirds of the church members contribute very little to the income. About one-third give three-fourths to four-fifths of all the church receives; another third give something but not proportionately or systematically; the last third throw an occasional dime or nickel on the collection plate. These two-thirds can be

reached by a Christian business system. It has been done in some local churches. Their giving would overflow every treasury of the local and general church. The crisis in Foreign Missions, in Home Missions, and all larger work is here at the unorganized giving of the local church.

3. Three-fourths of the church do not go to any service between Sundays. Hence many churches in large towns or villages have only one poorly-attended and dreary week-night meeting. But the mid-week service is truly the thermometer of the church spiritually. A pastor in England had fifteen hundred men at his prayer-meeting.* It can be done here when the conditions are studied and met. Who can measure what the whole church in America at weekly meetings on one or two nights, would mean for evangelizing power? What a great unplowed, unworked field, to make our religion an everyday life and not merely a Sunday exercise.

4. Five-sixths have little or no interest in general church work or in missions. They take no church paper, attend no conventions or other gatherings, give a little money only under special pressure and often under strong appeals to various motives. There is money enough in that vast unworked field to flood every general

* Statement of Rev. Dr. Aked of New York. Rev. Dr. L. A. Banks, now of Denver, has long been famous for developing prayer-meetings as large as this mentioned.

treasury to running over, and then to multiply many fold all the forces on the field. It can be reached by the methods every business man would know how to start and perfect.

5. Nine-tenths of the members in the average church (there are notable exceptions), do no work for Christ either in teaching, public prayer, administrative or benevolent work, or any other work that means real service. What an army has been enlisted but has been given no guns, not stationed at any post! The inertia of this vast mass can be broken up, as many instances show, and practically every member set to work at what he or she can do for Christ.

6. Ninety-five out of a hundred in the church never led a soul to Christ nor have they ever done any personal work of a soul-winning character. What if only one-fourth of all the members can be trained for such personal evangelism? The world would shake with a spiritual earthquake.

The local church is a mine of unworked treasures. And the condition is worst in all these particulars in the country church and in the village. It is better than the average in the small city up to one hundred thousand population where the best developed churches exist to-day but even there in many cases, the distressing figures now given will not have to be changed radically.

The next great movement of Christendom, therefore, will be the development of the local church. Of necessity, for there is the crisis of

Christian progress. If a general movement for organizing in a modern way the whole local church can be started and given the enthusiasm of the present Sunday-school movement it can be done; if the whole can have the fire and power which that part, the Christian Endeavor, the Baptist Young People's Union, and the Epworth League first had, it will be done. The modern organizing spirit and practical methods which have made Christian civilization will at last, for the church itself is always last in practical good sense, get into the church, and she who has really accomplished wonders of accessions to discipleship and influence with a small fraction at work will sweep the world when all her resources are engaged.

This is supremely important in our rural Christendom where the undeveloped condition is sorest and yet where so large a majority of the whole church lives. Though the church there is first as the social center and most prominent of buildings it is closed all the week except for a few hours. It touches usually only the spiritual side of man's nature and that partially and unsystematically. It lacks the push of business and the interest of all other intellectual activities, though it deals with the profoundest problems of man's life from the most fascinating book in the world.

The rural church is not dead but unawakened; not exhausted but unworked; not crowded with

workers pushing each other out of places, as in the industrial world, but a factory whose wheels have hardly begun to turn and whose work benches invite all men to come and be busy in the broadest and most varied service to mankind.

Shall we now get for ourselves the vision of the powerful local church? The vision which Christ saw in the constitution and charter he gave to his church is the most practical to-day. Surely it is easier to work the church according to his plans with his power than on any lower plane. Steadily let us advance from the good to the better and to the ideal in Christ. The good is not sufficient when the better is possible for "the good may be the enemy of the best."

"Good, better, best,
Never let it rest
Till your good is better
And your better, best!"

Let us get a national view of the local churches of America, to see them in rural districts.

First, the entire number in cities and rural places of the principal denominations:*

		Churches,	Members,	
Baptist,	15	Denominations,	55,294	5,224,305
Catholics,	9	"	12,764	12,069,275
Congregationalists,			5,941	699,277
Disciples,			11,307	1,285,123
Jews,	2	Bodies,	570	143,000
Lutherans,	24	Denominations,	13,169	2,022,608
Methodists,	17	"	61,518	4,660,784
Presbyterians,	12	"	16,478	1,821,904
Prot. Episcopal,	2	"	7,779	830,659
Reformed,	3	"	2,596	410,458

* Statistics for 1908 by Dr. H. K. Carroll in "Christian Advocate," N. Y.

The total number of all Christian churches is 210,249 and 33,409,104 members in all.

The country districts, farming, village, town, contain three-fifths of all the population of the land and their proportion of churches is even greater; it is likely that nearly 150,000 churches are scattered in American rural regions. The number of members, however, is far smaller relatively than in cities.

We have, therefore, nearly 150,000 country churches which may become centers of spiritual power and of many streams of helpfulness to all the people. There are only 140,519 Sunday-schools in America and, as nearly all city churches have Sunday-schools, it is certain that only one-half of all rural churches in all the land maintain a Sunday-school. What a startling side-light upon our problem is this single fact! The Sunday-school enrolment is only 11,229,953 or about one-third of the total church membership. A fair estimate of the rural situation in regard to the Sunday-school would indicate that nearly three-fourths of the church members do not go to Sunday-school.

Before entering upon specific lines of Christ's work in the local church, we must look again upon Christ's own declaration of the principles underlying his work. We discussed them at length in the opening chapter of Section II. and need here only outline them afresh.

I. Organization, perfected and extended to the

last member, as the medium for immediate and fullest expression for the spirit of God.

2. The willing ones to begin with, the nucleus of power and lasting enthusiasm, and the quickest way to large results.

3. Sacrifice for Christ in gratitude for his life and death for us. The heroic spirit still in most men responds always most largely to it, and it is the way to power, joy, and earnestness. Christ, no less than the nation, must have soldiers ready to give their lives and their all for his service. This is no sentiment but a plain practical principle as successful to-day as ever in Apostolic times.

4. The call of God felt by leaders and workers. Upon these cardinal principles the Primitive Church conquered the world in a few centuries with supreme difficulties of travel and opposition. The Reformation returned to them and swept over Europe with spiritual Christianity. The revivals and missionary expansion of recent years came in the same way.

Here the country church may stand and conquer, whether in sparsely settled farming region, in the village, the town, or the suburb, with the assurance of charter rights from Christ himself, and of his immediate and ever-growing power in it.

CHAPTER XIX.

TO EVERY CREATURE.

CHRIST'S Church is commanded to preach his gospel to every creature and to teach every one all the things he commanded. In another putting of it, she is commanded to make disciples of all men, to go into the highways and hedges, the streets and lanes of the cities and compel them to come to him.

The general church is magnificently assuming this responsibility for the whole world. Pastors have long led in general movements of their denominations as a whole, and now the laymen are in similar general organizations. They have wonderful visions, "to save the world in this generation"—"We can if we will"—"We can and we will." Then there is the Young People's remarkable Missionary Movement, a federation for all the churches.

But all these are almost wholly great movements outside of the local churches. The older movements, chiefly of pastors, embraced a large

number of choice spirits coming together in large conventions and organizing general Boards, and appealing to the local churches as units or to them through their pastors. The laymen's association likewise gathers the choice spirits here and there but away from their local churches, and they organize other denominational movements once more appealing to the local church as a unit, but they get no farther in reaching the individuals of that sadly undeveloped unit of power.

These general movements would be mighty dynamos of inspiration if the local church could be adequately wired. But five-sixths of the local church never hear of them, nor feel their thrill of a new enthusiasm, nor their awful sense of personal responsibility. Until these are reached all the general missionary movements expend themselves upon a few men in association with them who in their local churches already are paying most of the contributions, and filling three or four important offices each. It will do these men great good and will add somewhat to the income for missions, though nearly all of these leaders have already given generously and steadily.

Meanwhile the supply of men for the ministry is becoming a serious problem in many churches, and volunteers for missions are not of the sort needed. One Board examined scores of applicants and was able to accept less than half

a dozen. Another examined fifty and took only two.

The local church, every local church in city and country, now stands in the way and must be dealt with in the light of all modern intelligence for organizing and developing latent energies. Here is where Christ's chariot of triumph has stopped.

1. The local church must be made to feel its mission to preach the gospel to every creature. Every member of it has laid upon him by Christ his share of world-wide evangelization, it is his personal duty, and it is the duty of the pastor and the church to bring it home to him. The local church must stand for the salvation of the whole world first of all, and have that laid upon the conscience of every member sincerely, unflinchingly for Christ's sake. You will say, practically in the country church this simply means that we appeal again to the pastors as we have so often done. No! it means that by every means the pastor must understand that a new gospel, the old gospel so long unpreached, of fearful individual responsibility for the world's salvation must ring in the local church. Preached until every man is reached and in line. It means that we can assure pastors from notable cases that such a gospel will be responded to and divinely blessed. That if the pastor begins with the nucleus of willing ones and persistently

reaches out he will have enlisted the whole church.

Beginning with the willing ones as a center of power is the secret of successful church organization. Never to be discouraged at the smallness of beginnings, but to call for those whose hearts God has touched and who gladly respond, intensify their earnestness until it flames, plan most aggressive personal work through them, persevere in it as all business men know how to do, and the local church can be worked over in a year or two into a live and eager missionary body.

This was Christ's method in his personal ministry in the selection of workers. He would not have followers who came for loaves and fishes, he wanted none who came because the crowd was with him, for he melted that crowd away by his words, hard for them to accept, and he tested the love and willingness of his followers in many ways. The call for those who come gladly and with willing heart is always responded to, as I have seen, wherever it is tried. Often by more people than would come if scolded to come or importuned on personal grounds or sterner motives. Fear is effectual sometimes in exhorting men to avoid sin, but it is unwise to appeal to in urging them into God's service. There is a joy in enlisting willingly which itself is an element of power, and it is a repudiation of all we have said about the higher

enthusiasm and joy of the Christian life if in the presence of sinners we are obliged to beg and beseech and threaten Christian people to do some work for Christ.

It is still more shameful if we are compelled to beg for money to support world-wide missions. The character of the pleas for foreign missions from our pulpits which desperately beseech the people not to give less than last year for the reputation of the church, or which urge attendance upon some foolish entertainment to swell the missionary funds, is enough to disgust a thoughtful attendant who is trying to discover in the church whether love to God is real or whether those particular Christians are shams.

This does not occur where the town church pursues mission study courses with abundance of informing literature, charts, maps, and led by a pastor whose heart burns for the world's salvation. Where the Sunday-school has mission studies regularly, and where auxiliaries of Foreign and Home societies are in operation. Where the Young People's society has its earnest missionary committee at work and is pushing regular offerings from all the members.

It requires very much agitation and education on Missions to reach every one of even a few hundred members. It will only be accomplished when proportionate and systematic giving is the rule in the church. But even in the village and country church a large missionary

interest and enthusiasm has been created and maintained. And it is not necessary to resort to petty schemes for it nor to appeal to unworthy motives.

It is never necessary to do it in a church which possesses any spiritual life at all for the Lord's little company are still there and they will respond to him when his call is given joyously and in faith for really aggressive work for his cause. His work if it is to receive his blessing must be begun with the willing ones for we have no commission from him to invite any others.

The first work is to reach every creature in the church's immediate parish. But for this home work there is needed the enthusiasm of the world-wide work to which the little church in town or village gives money and if possible missionaries. The church now faces its duty to evangelize every man, woman, and child in all the region round it, and it is seriously undertaken with adequate plans. Ingathering plans are so finely matured and have been so successful that we offer them to the little band of willing ones of the local church.

If that willing band consists of but one worker let us see what has been done. In Nevada, Ohio, a village of 900 people (864 by the last census), Mr. Henry Kinzly, a modest grocer in the place, but an earnest Christian, was made superintendent of the Sunday-school, one of two there. He found an enrollment of about sixty scholars,

but like a modern business man he studied this new business for God, thrust upon him, modest as he was and so timid it was almost impossible for him to pray in public. He read books and pamphlets upon methods of Sunday-school organization, attended conventions, day by day thought about the school and its possibilities. Almost single-handed he began every movement like house to house visitation, Adult Bible class organization, the Home Department, the Cradle Roll, Decision Day, and so on. He has now enrolled, according to report from him just received, seven hundred and fifty, drawing for some on the country outside; two hundred and twenty-five conversions have occurred in the Sunday-school, 550 have signed the temperance pledge, the saloons have been driven out of the village, a new church building costing \$18,000, has been erected. The other Sunday-school also has prospered and another new church built in the village. When he wanted a Home Department no one was ready to begin it, so he himself went from house to house; when he wanted new scholars he sought them in the same way. Now he has a beehive of joyous and enthusiastic helpers. His epigrammatic advice is fine: "If any one should ask me for the best methods to build up Sunday-schools and advance church work, I would say, first, Get rid of saloons; second, Then get busy."

Marburg, Ala., is a village of about four

hundred people in which Mr. D. H. Marburg, has a Sunday-school enrolling 577 people. It is so popular that after having enrolled every soul in the village, crowds for miles from the country round come to it and join it. One old man claiming to be 114 years old is a member of the organized adult class. This school began with eighty, two years before, and it was the house to house work under the leadership of one man that accomplished the result.

In Tennessee is a rural town of about 2,500 people with five churches, four of which have very active Sunday-schools. In one of them an earnest lawyer has gathered a Bible class of men, enrolling 275 and having an attendance of 150. Men are not impossible to attract to the church when the earnest workers go after them. So in a larger town, Ashland, Ohio, of about 7,000, still below what the United States census authorities call a city, there is one Sunday-school of more than 1,000 in numbers and had 881 present one Sunday. There are now thirty-one Adult Bible classes there of large numbers, thoroughly organized for mutual help. At the annual banquet of men more than 1,000 men dined together, and these earnest men voted out the saloon in an election with 325 majority. Much of this work is from the earnest activity of Mr. W. D. Stem, a business man of Ashland.

In Hagerstown, Maryland, there are more than twenty-five organized Adult Bible classes started

from one class largely the inspiring work of a traveling salesman, as his pastor declares.

The marvelous work of Mr. Marshall A. Hudson, the founder of the Baraca and Philathea organized adult classes, is becoming well known. He began in Syracuse, New York, to organize a small Bible class of men in 1890. Three hundred and fifty men have been converted and joined the church from the large membership of that class. Then Mr. Hudson gave up a lucrative business and is devoting himself in continent wide travel to gathering men into such church work. He is lovingly called, "the man who wants a million," a million men saved through the Bible study work, and it is no idle dream with him for already 2,700 such classes are in operation, and of men and women about 500,000, half his million, are enrolled "to do things," "to stand by the Bible and the Bible school," and "men to work for men." We could multiply such instances to fill a volume.

How can the work of reaching every individual in the local field be begun and prosecuted? In one small town of about two thousand people, six churches were struggling for existence. The pastors in conference gave the total enrollment of all their churches at about 600 and of Sunday-schools 650, so it was found that fully fourteen hundred people, all English-speaking and American born, were not reached by any of the churches. Such a census clears the way for a

detailed visitation undertaken by the churches in union, the visitors going two by two to each home and ascertaining the religious preference of church membership of every person. The cards containing this data are then distributed to each pastor concerned with the particular ones and he has by this means his entire field defined for his work. He follows it up with visits to the people preferring his church and by various means lays siege to win those homes to Christ. Every other pastor takes care of his own, and thus every soul is included somewhere.

Then must follow the personal work for every individual steadily continued until he is saved. How do business men work? One great firm dealing in food supplies sent its salesman forty-eight times to a retail grocer before he received an order and then came a large business; another, a coal dealer, sent twenty-six times to a manufacturer before the first favorable response. When we have gone twenty-six times or forty-eight times to win a soul then we shall be like modern business for money. But doubtless after that Christ would say go seventy times seven times again. Yet it is not necessary to go often to win souls. The experience of personal workers is that very many come by the first invitation and are saved; many others after a few visits. It is easier in fact to secure men's acceptance of Christ by an earnest worker than it is to sell goods to them, or to get them to change

their political party, or to invest largely in new enterprises.*

The complete plan for field work by the local church is to have a permanent force for the field assigned to country districts well defined. They visit every home at certain times, keep watch for any new family in their district, call upon them at once, and bring systematic influences to bear upon them to become Christians. One church has so wonderful a field organization of this kind in a new section of a city that twenty new scholars come to its school on an average every Sunday. Another increased its school by such a force from two hundred to eleven hundred in a few years.

In all this church work there is loving study of individuals in the gospel estimate of the value of one soul. Planning in all possible ways to reach him by this or that person, by this and that influence, and by various meetings in which he might become interested. How vastly different is this Christlike concern for individuals from **the** meddlesome prying into his affairs in the days of gossip. When the local church becomes fully organized there will be many points of contact with individuals. With a Young People's society, a Brotherhood, a Ladies' Mission Band, a Home Department, the Cradle Roll for the baby of the family, the organized adult class

* Personal testimony of many workers in Sunday-school Religious Canvasses.

which is so popular, some literary society of the village or town church, much wise social work, and so on, all of which is practicable in the town and larger villages, and is in operation in some of them. A modern organization of the Sunday-school is the most powerful aid to the field workers for the local church.

There are pastors who have organized their parish visitation on the field force, making parish visits definite in purpose instead of merely social, and deeply spiritual in results. A keen business man discussing the possibilities of such a plan said, "I would give large wages to have such a body of solicitors for strictly business purposes." He knew very well that the splendid men and women voluntarily doing district work could not be hired for any money he could afford to pay them. The church has their services without pay and the church everywhere that is willing to persevere in organizing such a work can secure such people gladly to undertake it.

The Boys' Messenger Corps is another field force, following up the district workers with distribution of church and Sunday-school literature, tracts, and church announcements; they are used to carry flowers to the sick; letters to the people, the absentees, and to strangers. Christian boys are delighted to do such work, and designated by a metal or ribbon badge, they are tireless parish workers.

The spread of church federation for amicable

co-operation between local congregations in their field comes to us opportunely. There may be secured a full understanding of what each church is doing, a clear defining of each church's field, and no danger of accusations of proselyting. And next to obnoxious proselyting for loss of souls is the fear of being called a proselyter, and thus failing to visit families hastily assumed to belong to another church, but which in turn are avoided by that pastor for a similar fear, and thus they are neglected by all. But a primary investigation by all churches of the whole town as to religious inclinations and the data given to each church covers the whole field perfectly. The visitors in the general canvass become the visitors for their respective churches for still closer personal spiritual effort.

Thus the local church will thoroughly cover its immediate field reaching every creature while having a vision of the whole world field and every member a sense of his responsibility for both.

“ Be strong !

We are not here to play—to dream, to drift,

We have hard work to do and loads to lift,

Shun not the struggle—face it !

It is God's gift.”

M. D. BABCOCK.

CHAPTER XX.

EVERY MEMBER AT WORK WITH ALL HIS TALENTS.

THE parable of the talents teaches every man's responsibility to God for every one he possesses. It is keen knowledge of human nature that describes the man with one talent as the person who fails to use it. The one talent man, or those who think they have only one, are the inactive members of the church. But Jesus did not attempt to teach every truth about talents in one parable. He met a rich young ruler with probably five talents who went away and buried them all. He saw a woman in the temple who had the least ability in money-giving and yet used it all for God.

Who is to impress upon the individuals their duty concerning all the ability they have if the church does not? And how can the church effectively urge the use of talents when she neglects to provide the larger opportunities? Especially those which the New Testament church involves, for it is just as clearly the obligation of

the whole church to reach out to the world's varied needs as it is for a man to use all his various talents. Professor Hugh Black says: "The church is seen to be broader than its common definition. Time was when the church organization covered all life and was responsible for education, for the care of the poor, for all charitable and philanthropic work. It was even the dictator about all social affairs and customs; it settled what you could wear, when to work and play, when to go to bed. The time may be again when the church shall control life more than ever, when the conception is broadened to mean the higher social organization of life, the ideal, the universal brotherhood. The church no longer educates, cares for the poor, nor does philanthropic work. But the church should now supply inspiration for all social activities."

So the broader work of the church and the full use of her members' varied abilities complement each other. Here are men, to become definite, who have gifts of teaching, of special sympathy to comfort, of ability to clear away intellectual difficulties, of evangelistic appeal, of creating enthusiasms for hard struggles, of developing organization; gifts of preaching, teaching, administration, and leadership, and here is the suffering world needing just every one of these lives of endeavor. The field for the work is limitless, individual effort undirected and unorganized is exceedingly wasteful and ineffective. And indi-

vidual effort seldom begins spontaneously but chiefly by the inspiration of a powerful association.

So it becomes a question whether the church earnestly exhorting individuals to use their talents and all of them, really desires to have it done in the only way that ages of experience have shown it is practicable. Will the church diversify and extend her work so that all her people can find full activity in God's service?

In many country churches a little group of men hold all the offices. Not often by their own choice or manipulation, but because they are recognized as the persons best fitted for the offices and the church is doing nothing to train others. We know men who occupy three, or four, in a few cases, six important official positions in the church. There are men who are President of the Trustees, Superintendent of the Sunday-school, Ruling Elder, President of the Brotherhood, and of the choir in a Presbyterian church; one was Trustee, Secretary of the Board of Stewards, a Sunday-school teacher, President of the Young People's Society, leader of the choir, and Secretary of the Social Union in a Methodist church, and might have been President of the Ladies' Aid Society, if he had not been a man; another, a local preacher, Trustee, class leader, teacher in the Sunday-school, President of the Brotherhood, and the Ushers' Association. It is very common for a capable man in a country church to be

forced into three or four offices all of great importance, and any one of which would take all the spare time of a man of other business during the day. The man of many such offices is not the man of leisure, nor a man who usually can command even clerical assistance, but very busy men who have only evenings and Sunday to give service to the church.

The inevitable consequence is that they lose, if they ever possessed, any worthy sense of the opportunity or responsibility of these positions of trust and power in Christ's Kingdom. The Sunday-school superintendent who is also Treasurer of the Board of Trustees, and therefore burdened with its financial cares, and leader of the choir with all the fusses and vexations of that, thinks little or nothing between Sundays of the Sunday-school. He comes to the school with no definite program for it, nor any study of methods and organization, if even he has looked at the current lesson. His vision of the Sunday-school opportunity is limited to precedents of forty years ago and to holding the school at the point he received it from his predecessor.

As Treasurer of the Board of Trustees he might become a specialist in church finance and in the Christian principles of giving, if he could give full attention to that office. He might even in the village develop a system of offerings that would furnish the church a liberal support. But he is pulled right and left now by exigencies in

the Sunday-school requiring a new teacher at once for a troublesome class, and then by crankiness in the choir. In the choir he cannot do good work because his other offices divide his attention and the little spare time he has at command. The most he can do is to bear meekly the honors of these great opportunities and stand in the way of somebody else doing good modern work.

In all these churches there are many men coming and going with nothing definite to do. They would not immediately grace these offices, or seem to grace them, as well as the much-officed incumbent. But it would be a blessing to them and in a short time to the church to elect them and give them training. If they are one-third equal to the other man they might possibly manage to fill as well one of the three offices the other man holds. They will in many cases develop abilities surprising themselves and the church. And with a division of responsibility each man could assume more for each office, become somewhat of a specialist, and thus strengthen the church where now she is lamentably weak, in the sense of personal opportunity and responsibility her officers feel in the important places they hold but do not fill.

One earnest man was elected Sunday-school superintendent when he was holding several other offices in the church, but he made it the condition of his acceptance that he should be relieved of every other office. He startled his

brethren, they in many offices, by saying that in his opinion the Sunday-school superintendency was so important that he must give all his time and attention to it. He was accordingly released and has stood ever since in a unique position as the Sunday-school superintendent and strongly that. In the prayer-meeting he prays and talks about the school, when his friends meet him it is natural to inquire about it, and in every movement of the church he stands for the Sunday-school with impressiveness. He now attends conventions, gives time to the study of methods, and is the Sunday-school enthusiast there!

“One man one office” should be the rule of the ordinary church, except in adding merely nominal positions. Then study all the individual members of the church to measure their abilities. Take an intellectual and spiritual inventory of resources. And of possibilities also by the training the church could give of young people. It will surprise the leaders how many there are unemployed. It often happens that the man himself of real abilities is unaware of them, and some of the most successful leaders have come to their powers slowly. There is no more practical message to troubled pastors than the word of Christ, “Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.” Christ himself prayed a whole night before he chose the twelve apostles. This prayer to him is always answered by pointing out in some way

capable workers, the divinely chosen and sent worker he then will become.

Fundamentally, the greatest work the church can do is to discover workers, to train them, and to place them. It is better to train ten men to do the work the pastor or a few leaders are doing, than each to try to spread himself over the places of ten men. Yet many pastors are gathering to themselves office after office in the little church which other people should be trained by him to fill. He is asking anxiously, "What can I do for the men of my church? what can I do to help young men?" when the men do not want anything more done for them, as if they were children, but most earnestly want to do something for the church.

The wise pastor will change his work to be largely training men for varied service, and placing them. He can do twenty times the work for Christ in that way and broaden and perpetuate the work.

Magnify the importance of every church office until men are afraid lightly to assume it. By the literature of Christian methods, now so abundant for every position, show the vast opportunities for good these places afford. Then with much prayer seek for the man or the woman of special promise or ability for it.

Every member of the church should be at work and every one using all his talents. The church is a force of sowers, tillers, and reapers;

it is an army of soldiers against evil in which every man is to be drilled and assigned; all are called to be witnesses for Christ and spread the invitation to be saved. Dr. Parkhurst says, "I have ceased to call this church my field, it is my force." This is the only position she can rightly hold in the presence of her Lord who has personally withdrawn from the earth and put her into his place to reach men. She is his body to express his feelings toward men, to speak to them, and to touch them with healing and saving for him. He wants no superfluous members on his living body, no paralyzed limbs nor even fingers.

For practical beginning let the earnest pastor call a meeting of those desiring to give themselves more fully to Christ's work. Call for those who are willing, and accept gladly those whom the Spirit moves to come after the earnest appeal, and organize them into a Personal Workers' Band. No matter though the prominent members have not responded and those who have are the least known. If you have joyously in faith given Christ's call he has impressed it upon his willing ones and you have them. Select a list of persons to be prayed for and sought to become Christians. Let the Personal Workers' Band individually assume the names they will seek. After a few days or a week have reports of what they have done and the results. Discuss with them the successes, failures, difficulties and start on

another effort. Let them bring others who desire to join as personal workers.

Keep up this meeting weekly or oftener and study the art of Christian conversation, the principles of successful approach to men spiritually, and the successes and failures of your band. There cannot possibly be a meeting so important to continue as this, and none upon which the Saviour who died for men will look with such blessing and power. It will lead to the largest results in any church which could be gotten in that church in any way in a year, or a series of years. A whole church has been powerfully stirred by it in a year.

The 'Personal Workers' Band are the company of Apostles in the local church. They were, with the rest, only disciples, weak and faltering, with no confidence in their ability to win men to Christ. So were the twelve and the rest of the upper room company before the day of the coming of the Holy Spirit. Then see them! See Peter who trembled before a young maid now bold before a whole city, and winning thousands. And behold Stephen and Paul and the rest before and after they were filled with power by the Spirit. One company of such workers brought three hundred and fifty to Christ, one man more than a hundred, another seventy-five. A young man completely helpless in bed by rheumatic arthritis which had stiffened every joint, but one wrist and a little motion in his neck, was so

eager to speak for Christ to his visitors that he had many notable cases of conversion in that strange sick room.

This work of winning men to Christ by the personal effort of the members of the church is the central work of the church. Other lines of helpfulness to men belong to the church unquestionably and must be added. There are certain features of the Institutional church practical and contributory to spiritual results in many country districts. But the church may do every other work of the most diversified Institutional organization, and if it fails to be chiefly or most largely for spiritual results it is not a church of Christ. The Institutional has ever drawn men away from Christ when the "institutions" were the dominant features, and the spiritual center was weak. There is no better way to guard this peril than by the Personal Workers gradually extending into the whole church.

Yet while man is a soul in a body with a mind, a heart, beauty-loving eyes, music-loving ears, a body subject to disease or capable of splendid powers there will be required many lines of work fully to save him. Christ found it so in his personal ministry, and those who study Christ's breadth of work and his methods are moved to many-sided church enterprises. These will be added as the church like a spiritual body or a great tree becomes filled with life and gushes out new branches of effort in natural development.

The men who are needed to prosecute these new movements are gathered into the church by the same spirit.

One church, notable for having nearly every member a worker, presents a card to every person who joins having nine distinct lines of work indicated. The new member may choose one or two of the lines of work, and then a regular church officer charged with that duty inducts the new member into the work he or she has chosen.

“Impracticable in my church!” So it may be but the burden of proof is upon that pastor to show it is impracticable. “How?” How, but by a fair trial. It is the command of the Head of the church to reach every creature and for every member to work with all his talents. There must be the loyal soldier’s obedience if he dies trying to carry out the command. The Duke of Wellington was asked, “Do you think it is the duty of the church to push foreign missions?” The grim old veteran said sharply, “Look to your orders, sir! What does Christ command?” It is queer anachronism in the church, far behind our bold business and scientific times, to say that anything is impossible, or impracticable. The inventor will not say the word. The business man never utters it of any new enterprise, the physician will not despair before any human ailment, the scientist cannot define any region of human effort as impossible. Christ above all taught us never to say it of anything

in which God was called upon to help. Die or let the church die in the heroic struggle to do the work for which alone Christ organized his Church. There is evidence enough that churches die for failure thus to obey Christ, but none as yet upon which as a church it could be said, Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord.

In the new era of the country with electric cars and the rest this extension of spiritual life and energy to every member of the church becomes even more important. Many of the discouraging difficulties of former times are passing even now in farming regions, and still more in towns, and in suburbs. There are now rural churches where the opportunity for spiritual expansion within is greater than in many city churches. The prospects are aglow with wonderful promise. The old men dream dreams as the Holy Spirit comes upon them and the young men see visions. And what vision of the Church can a young man in our day see but that she is at work with all modern enterprise, thorough business organization and every member according to John Wesley's rule, "Doing all the good he can, by all the means he can, in all the ways he can, in all the places, at all times, to all the people he can, and as long as ever he can." And when he has done all this he must say with that wonderful worker-poetess, Mrs. Browning, "I have not used half the powers God has given me."

CHAPTER XXI.

TO PERFECT EVERY MAN IN ALL HIS NATURE.

THE God of nature, of man's wonderful and complex nature, is the head of the Church, the Christ. He himself did a very broad work for the people of Galilee and Judea in his personal ministry and a work of which he declares repeatedly, in many forms of utterance, that he began what his believers are to do more largely. One typical expression will suffice, surely: "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father."

Among his personal works were the healing of the sick, feeding the hungry, giving a great haul of fish to a man for the use of his boat, adding provisions to a wedding feast, expediting a vessel in its voyage across the lake, acting Temple guard for its purifying, rescuing a man from drowning, enforcing the law respecting swine; teaching ethics, courtesy, and business shrewdness; and all the time chiefly engaged in saving men from sin.

His apostles and workers were to do these things more largely than was possible to him by his limited time and may we not freely add, in forms more permanently helpful to men and to civilization. For instance, to heal the sick by direct miracle is marvelous and then, in more cases than now, was the only way it could be done. In many cases it is yet the only way if God wills they shall be healed. Who can gainsay the clear evidence that he does yet so heal many? But how much more wonderful is the healing of a thousand by the regular scientific ways in our time for one by miracle. Who again can question that this is also God's way, for are not scientific laws his laws?

He expedited the voyage by a miracle. We do it by steam, by the turbine engine and quadruple expansion of steam. It is wonderful and greater. Let us not bring down the miraculous by denying it, but bring up the regular and the ordinary to greater results than the miraculous ever accomplished.

What, then, is the scope of church work Christ designated for his church? How much of this work can be done or is needed to be done in country places?

1. All the churches now recognize many duties to their people physically. They are under obligation to take tender care of the aged and the poor; to visit and as far as possible help the sick; to cultivate sympathy for the unemployed and

the unfortunate in business, and to teach the gospel of a pure and sound body. Churches in towns and in some suburbs need especially to look after the poor, the widow and the orphan, and no less the motherless children. Home finding for the orphan may be done by the local church, some ladies' society making it their special line of Christlike work.

Many country churches go farther and feel it their duty to influence state and local action on the improvement of civic and industrial conditions, and by federated action with other churches and with good people to provide public gymnasiums, and to co-operate with the Young Men's Christian Associations, and the Young Women's Christian Associations, in physical culture. Where such opportunities are provided by other agencies the church gives inspiration and co-operation. But in many places the church is the only body to lead in such movements. The gospel on the physical nature is the loftiest thought ever entertained about the human body—that it is the temple of the Holy Spirit, and that in it the spirit of Jesus is re-incarnated for his continued work to save man.

To secure full control of the body for Christ's work is the real philosophy of fasting from food. It is a grave wrong to young Christians not clearly to teach the blessings of such intermission of meals, and temperate eating at all times. And this with protracted seasons of communion

with God, not on public or general occasions, or at set times, but as between every soul and God. The true church will also teach this truth of Christ that greater spiritual power comes only when every whim of appetite and the slightest bondage of physical desires is broken. The first effort at fasting will seem harmful because it makes more insistent all these appetites and disturbs prayer, but after the body is completely under, or in perfect control, meals are omitted without consciousness of them and the long continued prayer and meditation is realized then in all joy and power.

2. What can the country church do socially? She can revive true Christian hospitality by teaching its blessed privileges, and by means of conventions, Sunday-school Institutes, and other Christian gatherings give opportunity for its exercise. The pastor will covet for his people the close fellowship which such church gatherings give with earnest Christian workers. There should be clear thinking upon hospitality, not the disdainful shrug of fashionable shoulders that it is an antiquated thing, or an Oriental custom. There is no substitute for it in human society, as our sneering wealthy objector himself and herself prove by making large use of it for their exclusive set in most expensive, long-drawn-out, and frequent dinners. All winter long in large cities, there are whirls of suppers, dinners, breakfasts (at noon or later) with princely extrava-

gance. Objections from such quarters to entertaining God's people are curious illustrations of straining out gnats and easily swallowing camels. It is not to save money for the guests, not that they want it, but as a privilege for promoting spiritual life that hospitality in connection with church meetings holds exalted place. It makes personal influence most powerful and brings heart to heart most sweetly.

Still further of the same kind, the Christian homes of the well-to-do in the suburb, town, or village can occasionally invite groups of church workers of the local church to their hospitality in connection with the development of their plans for the church. Definite movements for new work are thus started by our English cousins at "breakfasts," by noble laymen of our country, like Mr. W. N. Hartshorn of Boston notably, and others, inviting men and women to their homes for several days at a time in the interest of some Christian enterprise.

If possible the town or village church should keep "open house" every night. A social room should be provided, or part of the room set off for the purpose, books and magazines on hand for those who desire to read, but the freedom of social conversation permitted at one end of the room, or in another room. Many young people do not care to read all the evening and conversation is helpful under wise supervision.

3. For man intellectually the duty of the

church has greatly changed with the wonderful growth of schools and colleges in every part of the land. But there is obligation to the young people just from college or high school graduates. Their peril upon entering business or a profession is to drop all strenuous study and fall into slipshod habits of reading and thinking. There are churches in our towns, which with fine good sense, provide just enough intellectual activity in the church to keep these cultured minds on the high plane of former college life. In some towns the Chautauqua Circle maintains the college spirit and thinking, in others a high grade lecture course helps, and in still others a local debating society. These churches have their reward in the able service of such young men.

Pastors are steadily becoming a more learned body of men and do not need to have pointed out to them the brainy young men who come to church. They do not come for lectures in pretentious scholarship but to have the sermon up to best standards intellectually yet warm in spiritual life. The men who are popular with "the fellows" as preachers are those of deepest spirituality and simplicity but, of course, of finest intellectual breadth and grasp.

4. Esthetically the influence of Jesus on the world has been amazing. Famous masters in painting and music have been inspired to their masterpieces by him. Jesus has brought about a sublime era in art and music, and all that realm

of the beautiful to which so many now give their lives. In America it is plain we are approaching our golden age of art. Children in country schools are learning drawing and music, some of the young people are attending conservatories and art schools. The church must by all means to some extent satisfy their love of the beautiful, it is the spirit of Jesus to do it, or lose her choice young people, and more and more some older people of such tastes.

There is surely no justification for the unsightly church building and its shabby surroundings. I have seen a piece of wall paper torn and hanging at loose ends for months in a country church, a large patch of the plastering down in another for a long time, shutters broken off and hanging by one hinge, a gate that stubbornly stuck in the mud half way open; other churches long crying for paint, or for repairing. Old men who are trustees may never have had esthetic training or environment, and are insensible to the disgust and pain some of the children feel in attending such churches. And what about educated pastors from the larger towns or cities who have no eyes for such dishonor of God's house? Upon fathers and mothers there, with richer opportunities than the aged trustees, is laid the duty of beautifying the church. Very much may be done at small expense but no expense is too great for the cure of souls, as the doctor would say, no

expense is too great for hospitals which are to heal bodies.

In the country how easy and inexpensive will be the grading of the church lawn. The planting of trees and flowers, the fresh paint outside, the tasteful pictures in the Sunday-school room, and the general beautifying of the church. Let us be sure that everything that would offend the artistic sense of the boy or girl is removed, and we shall the more teach that there is beauty in holiness.

The singing in public worship and in the Sunday-school is receiving more attention in towns and villages. We have elsewhere urged the village choral society, but here also the church has its great opportunity. There are village churches in England with wonderful singing by the congregation. It is an experience for a lifetime to visit them. The teaching of singing in the public schools and the larger number everywhere receiving private instruction gives many a small church the nucleus of trained voices for a chorus. Every winter's program of church work should include the singing-school for a term of instruction by the best teacher available. Some years ago in many parts of the country itinerant singing teachers had their round of five or six churches every week in different towns. The whole church was taught congregational singing, and what power came to the special meetings! The gospel in song is of mighty power and it is

passing strange that churches will be content even for a month with lifeless, incorrect, and unhelpful singing.

The broader Christlike work is actually done by some village congregations. A church in a little village in a neighboring state has a fine parish house with many lines of helpfulness, the popular resort every night of young and old. The church and Sunday-school are led in all modern methods and with spiritual power.*

5. Moral culture must be undertaken specifically if it is to be adequate in these days. There is confusion as to duties in business life, in Sabbath keeping, in popular amusements, in personal, civic, and social reforms. The importance of a tender and intelligent conscience is fundamental, but such a conscience is the result of careful teaching, personal thought upon great questions, and unflinching obedience to the right as it appears. What is the church doing for the moral culture of its people? What means or meetings has she for the training of tender conscience and specific traits of moral character?

There should, of course, be a clear ethical note in all sermons, sound teaching in the Sunday-school, and frequent public discussions of moral questions. In all its own business the church should set the example of promptness, scrupulous honesty and fidelity. It is a monstrous wrong to immature character to have the church or the

* Berwyn, Maryland, Presbyterian Church.

pastor involved in questionable business transactions.

The godly man is one who loves the Lord his God with all his heart, with all his mind, with all his soul, and with all his strength. We need not discuss the psychology of this division of human nature to become convinced that it means the whole man with every side of his nature developed and consecrated to God's service. We are not making such men when we have only their hearts regenerated and confine our work narrowly to the spiritual. We are indeed beginning the good work aright, but all the man is one and all of the man must necessarily be reached with new life to save him completely. Here is the Divine Charter of the church requiring her to do such institutional work which is co-ordinated with a powerful spiritual center. Every new development of such a church returns added power to the spiritual and contributes to personal power in Christian work. It is the five-pointed star which at a distance shines with one glorious effulgence. Such a church is a true church of the Kingdom of Christ.

Professor Kenyon L. Butterfield of the Massachusetts Agricultural College, who is one of former President Roosevelt's Commission on Country Life, said recently, "The country church must play an increasingly larger part in the development of country life. I believe country clergymen should have some special training for

their work in the way of special reading courses or in the seminaries. They should get more into touch with the problems of the farm and seek to develop a deeper interest among country life educational leaders in the country itself. We should keep more of our leaders at home. I don't believe in keeping all the boys on the farm but we don't want the motion to obtain, as it does in some places, that the way to make a big success of life is to get away from the farm."

"Greatly begin! though thou have time
For but a line, be that sublime,
Not failure but low aim is crime."

LOWELL.

CHAPTER XXII.

USING ALL HER RESOURCES.

THE Christian church is at sea about the duty of giving. The disastrous effects of this confusion of thought and lack of definite principles fall most heavily upon the small country church. The uncertainty about what the will of God is concerning our offerings and the indecision as to methods is unworthy of our day of Bible study and practical wisdom.

In the country church there is not often a very wealthy man who pays all the arrearages with cheerfulness, or with a grimace, but who in either attitude makes sure the church comes out square every year; nor are there in the country the small group of rich men who give three-fourths of the church's income. The little church in the village, whether panics come or go, is in continual financial hardships. The appeal to be "specially liberal to-day" on the plate is a regular accompaniment of worship, or a painful interruption of it, for the appeal must often

needs be made, as the pastor thinks, with a humorous remark, or an attempt at it, at which the strained feelings of the congregation break into a smile perfunctorily. We heard a dignified minister break the sweet influence of a season of worship on a New Year Sunday by urging all the people to give liberally, in fact "to give all the money they had in their pockets for he heard that an old proverb declared it is bad luck to leave the church on New Year Sunday with any money in your pocket!" That, however, was far less coarse than the usual funny story that starts the plate merrily along the aisles to receive, in spite of the desecrating story, just the same pennies it would have jingled if nothing had been said. And this pastor called the giving worship and blessed it when it returned to him. But he was not consistent in not introducing the long prayer with a very funny story and the hymns with a really humorous remark. Here we see the confusion in which giving is left.

But let us kindly remember that in many cases the pastor who makes the appeal has not a "whole silver dollar to rub against another in his pocket." One of them has a salary promised of six hundred dollars a year with two hundred and fifty in arrears, that is about one hundred paid in seven months, and it comes in small amounts irregularly. There are many such cases, some of them where a rich man could pay all the salary without inconvenience, but he neither

pays much nor develops a financial system. In probably a majority of country churches there is no financial method. A few times a year there is hurrying and scurrying, suppers and festivals, to make up "interest" on a long standing mortgage, or salary, in a humiliating way that is fearfully costly to the church's influence.

The plate collection is the only universal custom. It is sometimes a supplement to more systematic offerings by envelopes, but even as a supplement it seems a pitiable thing to exhibit before God in our land of abounding prosperity and reckless extravagance upon personal comforts. People who many times a week buy cigars for five cents, and chewing gum, soda water, and every other such thing, give in the following ways to God's cause once or twice a week. I have collected actual statistics of plate offerings in suburbs, villages, and towns.

In a good suburb for each service the average is $2\frac{1}{2}$ cents for each person present for the plate which is solemnly offered to God!

In a country village with about twenty persons as the average attendance the offerings were about fifty cents for each service.

A fine country church gives less per member on the plate than two cents, and this church gives altogether from many rich farmers about an average of only three dollars a year to all church work, local and general.

Imagine a lecture, humorous, literary, or scien-

tific, with a plate collection of 2½ cents for each person. Or a hospital run on such an income, or an army equipped by such contributions, or a life-saving station so managed. The hospital, the army, and life-saving work are so expensive they cannot be supported by private offerings but usually have government grants, but would the church really be less expensive than a hospital if the church were as thoroughly alive to the real needs of the mind and soul of man as physicians are to physical ills and remedies?

The foregoing specimens of offerings are typical of what I have learned but "there are better country churches!" Truly, and these admirable ones are some help in pointing the way out of the worst Slough of Despond in which the church is so needlessly floundering. Many have a system of finance and some suburban churches like city churches have men who foot all deficits.

The country church is not poverty-stricken because it has no resources but because they are undeveloped. Many people in the congregation have probably during the week spent several times as much foolishly as all the money on the plate; more for trifles and luxuries than for God's cause.

Any reform in giving which does not reach the New Testament foundations will build on the sand. What is the present day Christian's real duty in this matter? The money problem is well-nigh the supreme current problem of the

church. It involves the success of the church, best Christian character, and the honor of Christ's name. If the church were now holding Ecumenical Councils like those of Nice and Carthage, it would be worth holding such a representative assembly of all Christians to get at something sensible, adequate, and Christlike on giving of money.

Scriptural principles, however, are plain and we briefly state them and then develop the only system in harmony with them.

1. The Christian is regarded in the Scriptures as not the owner of any goods or money in his possession but the steward of it for God. This is an ancient doctrine but not carried to practical results. The stewardship of wealth is only a name until it is made the principle in giving, in actual offerings to God. Just as men recognize the owner of the house they rent by paying rent regularly, or of the money they have borrowed by an agreed rate of interest actually paid. Does this involve the tithe? Not necessarily as the rate of rent or of interest but the tithe is an illustration of exactly how the Scriptural principle operates.

2. Christian giving should be first-fruits. Before he apportions money for anything else he is under obligation to give in proportion to his prosperity to God, just as rent and interest come first. Should he give anything to God's cause while he is in debt? Yes! if giving to God's

cause is what the Scriptures hold it to be, also a debt, and absolutely, like rent and interest, the first claim. The law of first-fruits is based on the doctrine of Divine ownership and human stewardship.

3. Hence, systematic and proportionate giving. Of what should it be the proportion? Many members of the church base it upon the demands for money made by the church and estimate their proportion of this amount as their full obligation. Here is the reason for the stress in which the church now suffers. There is no such notion in the Scriptures on giving.

Of course it is equitable in a sense for every man to give his proportionate share toward any need presented by the church. This is the true brotherhood of bearing burdens according to ability. But no one pays rent to a landlord according to that landlord's needs, nor interest according to the lender's needs but according to certain rates on the whole amount or the whole property used.

The proportion for giving is based on the income of the Christian irrespective of the demands made upon him by his church. According as the Lord has prospered him so let him lay by him in store for offerings. The man who gives his share of demands made may be far from what he ought to give. And he is entirely on the wrong foundation. The present needs of the church are not the ultimate standard for the offerings of God's peo-

ple, for the church is attempting in only a small measure what is her full work.

3. The offerings should be based on a proportion of the individual's income in every case. This was the principle of tithing in ancient Israel and in later times. The treasury might be overflowing with unused tithes but this was no consideration to the tither. For the tithe it must be claimed that it was always a successful way of meeting the needs of religious work. In ancient Israel when church and state were one it was the first tax but by no means the limit of the Israelite's offerings. In many cases he probably gave fully another tithe and more.

The tithe was his beginning of offerings, taken out as first-fruits, and then he gave free-will offerings besides. If now the great council of churches we have suggested on this subject were considering this matter under the lead of practical Christian business men, what other plan could they adopt than to make the tithe, waiving all kinds of discussion of tithing as now an obligation, the sensible practical beginning of giving? It is certainly a good way of meeting all the principles of Bible offerings, it is simple and practicable, and it has the immense advantage of universal success wherever seriously tried for a time.

Let some one who objects bring on a better plan for beginning the church's financial organization now in such a fearful chaos. This matter

of securing resources for Christ's work practically, with missions now at a standstill and in local fields the work blocked for want of support, is supreme. We cannot stop longer for academic discussion, still less for mere objectors who have nothing better to offer. The church in the country above all needs a sound and permanent financial organization.

If then, experimentally and not as holding it a hard and fast obligation, the church should begin by asking all who love Christ and are willing to tithe to start the plan, we should be upon solid ground. If only a few in every church began it would be with power. If one-fourth of all church members reached tithing in a year we should have overflowing treasuries for all funds in another year. This is an easy and sure start, for every attempt to introduce tithing seriously has met encouraging response. Perhaps another proportion of income, say one-twelfth, one-fifteenth, or one-seventh might be tried, but no one ever succeeded on another proportion and the tithe has the prestige of long centuries and universal success, and as a beginning of a system it carries out the Bible principles of stewardship, first-fruits, and proportion of income.

(1) Many thousands of young people in the Christian Endeavor Tenth Legion began tithing with enthusiasm and few have withdrawn. The Tenth Legion now numbers 25,073 and was be-

gun in 1897 by Mr. W. L. Ammerman. They testify of its blessedness warmly.

(2) Many persons of large income, several men of great wealth, are tithers, and speak of it with deep gratitude and satisfaction. A large number of these testimonies have been gathered. (Thos. Kane, 310 Ashland Boulevard, Chicago.) These testimonies and instances would surely appeal to a practical business man, seeking a way out of the church's crisis for money for missions and home work.

(3) A goodly number of churches have begun with the "Tithe Covenant" plan for volunteers and smaller or larger groups have adopted tithing gladly. It seems possible in any church to secure a group to begin with it and it rapidly spreads to many others. We give a few examples, some of them in country churches.

Wesley Chapel, Cincinnati, was in 1895 in a most distressing condition of utter discouragement. In that year sixty of its members began to tithe their income, the number soon rose to 100 and now 158 are tithers out of a total membership of 550. These 158 pay $\frac{7}{8}$ of the church's income, the other 400 only $\frac{1}{8}$ by free will offerings, yet they are just as well off. The tithers are poor people with an average income of \$325, their tithe a little over \$30. Their tithe is given in unnamed envelopes and distributed to 25 causes, local, home and abroad. This church gives more than \$1,000 to missions, as much as

ten other down town churches. At one time out of 769 members 162 were tithers, 105 women, 45 men, 12 children, giving an average of \$31 for the year, their average income being therefore \$310. Only six people owned their homes. If all the 769 had tithed the income of the church would have been nearly \$25,000 for the year.

East Connersville, Ind., is a country church with twenty-five who tithe. After they began the church raised the pastor's salary from \$153, their share on a circuit plan, to \$800 with a pastor wholly for their church.

First Baptist Church, Peru, Ind., has 47 who tithe (18 men, 23 women, 6 children) and these gave \$849 in six months. Previously they had given \$415 in a year.

United Presbyterian Church, Aurora, Ill., three of four elders, two of five trustees, the pastor and nineteen others (25 in all) out of 150 members gave 47 per cent. of the church's income.

Third United Presbyterian Church, Chicago, has fifty tithers out of 213 and these $\frac{1}{4}$ give $\frac{3}{4}$ church offerings, $\frac{5}{6}$ of all for missions.

An interesting statement of the tithers of the Memorial Presbyterian Church, Indianapolis, shows how God often prospers those who thus honor his cause. Observe the increase in returns from just 27 tithers in successive quarters:—

First quarter, \$319.

Second quarter, \$723.

Third quarter, \$815.

Fourth quarter, \$652.

Fifth quarter, \$617.

Sixth quarter, \$910.

Seventh quarter, \$880.

Eighth quarter, \$1,256.

Later there were 70 tithers who gave, Jan. 1 to Oct. 1, 1904, \$3,018.

All others in the church, \$1,550.

Delaware Avenue Baptist Church, Buffalo, 30 tithers gave \$2,500 in 1903, a gain of \$700 by them in 1902.

The tithe was first adopted in Palestine, a land of small towns and villages. It is, therefore, a plan perfectly suited to the town and village conditions. How can the farmer calculate the real tenth of his income? Or how the country storekeeper? It is not possible to determine to a cent but it can be approximated. Let each man estimate about what is his personal income after deducting business expenses from gross receipts. Give the benefit of the doubt to the Lord's cause, for the tithe is not the limit of giving but only the practical beginning. The farmers and storekeepers who tithe have not been confused about how to calculate it. It may be calculated on the income of the preceding year where otherwise difficult to estimate.

Let the country church come to see the necessity of Scriptural giving; see the crisis upon the church for want of it, and the simple and sensi-

ble beginning of it by the tithe. A tithe is a fair rent for a building. The Sabbath law requires one-seventh of time to be given directly to God, who has claim to all, and is a close analogy. In both cases, the tenth of money and the seventh of time, there is no complete discharge of obligation, for all time and all money are to be used as God directs. But the direct giving of the proportionate first-fruits, the first day of the week and the first tenth of our income, are acknowledgment of Divine ownership and our stewardship of time and possessions.

Here the local church may practically start the Scriptural way of offerings in worship of God. There is now literature that will very clearly present the tithe, show its reasonable character, and then the pastor or church should issue a call to the willing ones after much prayer and conference. A country church in Pennsylvania had nearly a hundred to respond after a wise presentation of the matter and that church has wonderfully flourished since. Individuals who tithe, like the writer for more than twenty-five years, always speak of the convenience of it and the satisfaction of it as a method. All tithers are sure also to be "free-will offerers" beyond, but the tithe is the first-fruits taken out sacredly first. We waive, let us repeat, all discussion of the tithe as an obligation upon Christians or as the limit of their obligation. We see in it only a practical and sure beginning of

Scriptural giving which shall be upon the principles of stewardship, proportionate of income, first-fruits and systematic.

The crisis upon the church in regard to her inadequate income is painful and shameful. It arises from the very success of Foreign Missions and unparalleled opportunities in the Home Land. But the local church's undeveloped resources and her untrained membership are the gigantic obstacle. We heard recently a passionate plea from the secretary of a great denomination's Board of Home Missions that was obliged to cut appropriations this very year nearly 20 per cent. on all its fields, though they ought to spend twice the former amount at once, and yet with the cut fifty thousand dollars in debt! And a few days later the secretary of the Foreign Missions just as painfully showed wonderful opportunities in China, Korea, in South America, and in Africa calling for millions of money at once but nothing additional forthcoming. Young men offer themselves for Mission work who are remarkably endowed and cultured but there is no money to send them! Fields calling for hundreds more men but workers actually have to be withdrawn for want of money!

And all the while the church in America has members in the midst of boundless material prosperity only one-sixth of whom have ever heard of these wonderful opportunities, and few of these one-sixth giving systematically or propor-

tionately. The other five-sixths never from their conversion on have been made to feel any real sense of their responsibility for the salvation of the world or for Scriptural giving.

The pleas, agonizing pleas, of these missionary secretaries were made to the pastors of these undeveloped churches, and because nothing was done to fully organize for missions and finances, probably not one thousand dollars additional could be wrung from the nearly three hundred country and city pastors who heard and applauded the great speeches!

Yet no one doubts that universal tithing or even a partial number in all churches tithing, or *simply calling into organization those willing to begin*, under good leadership would solve the fearful problem. No one is able to suggest any other way, for every other way has been tried, good plans and discreditable plans, and all have failed.

One-seventh of time was to be the Lord's in the ancient church and one-tenth of income. We have maintained the time proportion in Sabbath keeping but what would have happened if we had dealt with that as we do with the one-tenth of income? What if preaching about the Sabbath institution were as shifty, uninformed, and undecided as it is upon the tithe? Confusion and disaster upon the church would result if the Sabbath were abandoned. But confusion, shame, and disaster in fearful crises are upon the church

for want of money. Lack of money for larger mission work in Japan has probably lost Christ that empire for this generation; it will forfeit the marvelous educational opportunity in China in the next decade; and India, South America, and other ripe fields.

How successful is the tithe! By it, as a voluntary undertaking, even a little country church that had raised only \$150 for a pastor's salary became such a success that they wanted a pastor's full time and gave him \$800. So there will be overflowing treasuries when Christians give by the Scriptural plan, and not simply on the present demands of a timid and partially worked church, unable to enter vast fields white to the harvest.

4. The local church and the general field should ordinarily share equally. This is the principle adopted by the best progressive churches. An envelope, the duplex, is a convenient plan for carrying it into effect.

5. When the tithing has reached a large number of any church the distribution of funds may be planned broadly for all.

6. In the use of the Lord's money a serious question is upon the crowded condition of churches in many small towns. As long as there are 15 denominations of Baptists in America, 9 of Catholics, 24 denominations of Lutherans, 17 of Methodists, 12 of Presbyterians, 3 Reformed, and about forty good sized denominations be-

sides, the inviting little town will have in many cases five to eight weak churches. Sometimes there are two or three strictly of the Methodist type, or that number all Lutherans, or Baptists, besides other denominations. There would not be necessary the surrender of a single doctrine, nor much, if any change, in forms of worship to unite these churches of the same type in a town. There are, of course, personal reasons, family reasons, old associations, property questions, but all these ought to be given up for the honor of Christ's cause. There have been in a few cases the union of Baptists with Congregational, and Methodist with Congregational, but the union of weak churches of exactly the same type ought to be much easier, and in the small town is surely an imperative duty. The two pastors out of five thus released and the money raised, besides what the denominational Home Missions give, are needed elsewhere. For every town with too many churches there is another with none at all. A competent authority, Rev. Dr. Ward Platt,* of one great Home Missionary Society, says, "In the new Northwest of the United States there are more than 1,000 towns where boys and girls have never seen a church, never had the privilege of attending a Sunday-school, and in which no religious societies exist." This is only one section. The federation or amalgamation of

* "The Frontier"—a discussion of Home Missions of great value. Rev. Dr. Ward Platt.

churches in older towns is a delicate matter when one gets close to it, or when one is pastor or trustee in one of the churches. But it is an imperative duty and necessity and has fortunately already been made a success.

In Vermont there are several small villages where a Congregational church without a pastor joined with a Methodist church in employing one pastor, each paying an equitable portion of expenses, and the benevolent offerings being apportioned to each denomination in the same way. Or a Baptist and a Methodist church were thus united. The arrangement is a success, as one of these pastors reports. In other states efforts are made with promise for complete amalgamation of two or three small churches into one, the denominational leaders approving and urging it.

In Philadelphia, Dec. 8, 1908, the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, a new organization for effective fellowship in the work of Christ's Kingdom, and representing officially twenty-three denominations including all the large ones, took advanced ground upon this duty of uniting small churches in towns now overcrowded with them. It "urges denominational leaders to come together in frank, fraternal conferences to consider their common interests in the extension of the Lord's Kingdom in rural districts, in order that financial wastefulness may be stopped, unseemly rivalry cease in

carrying on the work of evangelization. That over-churched communities may be relieved, un-churched communities supplied, and the cause of Christ find a new place of honor in the hearts of men."

Some Sunday-schools are now undertaking Scriptural instruction in giving in a practical and successful way possible at once in all towns, suburbs, and villages. The plan requires that the church assume all expenses of the school in its annual budget, and then have the Sunday-school on successive Sundays contribute to missions, to general church movements, and to the local church. These interests in each case are presented on the Sunday previous in a five-minute talk, using the blackboard and charts for statistics and outline exhibit. On first Sundays of the month, missions receive the offering; on the second, the local church; on the third, general movements of the church; on the fourth, the local church again; and on the fifth Sunday of a month which occurs once a quarter, some special cause local or general. Under wise instruction and management the Sunday-school gives back to the local church twice what its expenses are, and still better there is being trained a new generation of systematic and proportionate contributors to the Lord's work in the world.

If now, in thinking of the difficulties of securing sufficient resources for the Lord's work, we glance for a moment at the wealth and income

of the American people, how the importance of systematic and proportionate offerings is finally emphasized.

The enormous total wealth of the people in the United States is an incomprehensible figure, 116,000,000,000 (116 billions) of dollars, or nearly \$1,500 to each man, woman and child. Of this—

Productive Real Estate and Improvements...	55,000,000,000.
(Taxed property presumably earning income.)	
Live Stock.....	4,073,000,000.
Agricultural Products (in stock).	1,899,000,000.
Manufacturing “	7,409,000,000.
Annual value of all farm returns*.....	7,400,000,000.
Annual returns from manufacturing.....	15,000,000,000.

The United States contains only five per cent. of the world's population, but it raises 20 per cent. of all its wheat, 35 per cent. of its coal, 24 per cent. of its gold, 38 per cent. of its silver, 40 per cent. of its iron, 42 per cent. steel, 55 per cent. petroleum, 70 per cent. of its cotton, and 70 per cent. of its corn.

The United States Census collected statistics of the earnings in 123,703 establishments employing 3,207,819 work-people, over one-half of the whole number in America in such work. Their weekly pay is \$33,185,791, about \$1,600,000,000 a year.

One-third of all the people (more than $\frac{3}{8}$ really) belong to the church. One-third of all

* Estimate of Secretary of Agriculture for 1908.

the above income, or estimated income, if tithed, would reach from one thousand to nearly two thousand millions of dollars a year! The total offerings are probably less than two hundred millions for all purposes of religious service. That is about one-tenth of one-tenth of the income of Christian people in America. If we approached the tithe every movement of Christ's Kingdom could be wonderfully expanded, and the world could indeed be saved in this generation.

CHAPTER XXIII.

DISCOVERING, TRAINING, AND PLACING HER LEADERS AND WORKERS.

“WE raise men here,” said a Massachusetts farmer when his barren hills were compared with a sneer to Western fertility. To raise men is the real mission of the church, for all her work is for men, by men and for the production of noble manhood. Her supreme effort, therefore, must be to discover thoroughly able leaders and workers who can influence men in our day.

These able workers cannot be found already in full equipment. The church discovers them, if at all, in the rough, untrained, undeveloped. They must be recognized in the promise of their powers.

I. How can the work of finding talents in the country church be so organized that none escape? That the boy who might become a great missionary or a powerful preacher, a bold and successful reformer, or an educational leader may be brought out fully? Who does not recognize the paramount importance of it? The solemn obli-

gation of it? One such person found is reward for a generation's effort and lifts the church into a new era.

Discerning of spirits was accounted a Divine endowment upon the Apostles. The Lord bids us pray to him that he would send forth laborers into his harvest. After the prayer, in Christ's own case an all-night one, we may well be on the alert to see whom the Lord is calling. So the pastor and the church officers should seek for promising young men and women, and for all older men yet undeveloped, as men search for diamonds.

1. They will often be found hidden in a home with a dull and unhelpful parentage. Heredity has many subtle laws not yet defined. In a home where the father was unintelligent and without aspirations, the mother almost simple-minded, a brilliant little girl was born. She was intensely active in mind, with remarkable memory, imagination, penetration, and gifts of expression. Fortunately for her, she was too bright to be hidden. In another home of direct poverty and ignorance a brainy student and preacher distinguished in two continents began his life. Sometimes these children of genius in hard conditions themselves break through all barriers, especially when a part of their genius is an unconquerable will. But many have other fine qualities but not the strong will or defiant self-assertion. Gray's

“Elegy in a Country Churchyard” has application possibly to every country churchyard.

“Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid,
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;
Hands that the rod of empire might have swayed,
Or wake to ecstasy the living lyre;
Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest;
Some Cromwell guiltless of his country’s blood.”

Oh! the pity of it, the immeasurable loss of it to the world and to the kingdom of Christ. Let us stop any further such losses.

Unusual talents are often joined to profound modesty and self-depreciation, and unless some one lifts the person out of himself into his opportunity he will never seek it. Yet this same modesty or a genuine humility is one of the beautiful and powerful Christian graces, and if the Church can bring out this soul of intellectual powers it will secure a great spiritual leader. It will pay to search dark corners of the field for jewels of the kingdom.

2. The parents’ estimate of a child is often utterly wrong. The dreaming boy of some special talents is to his plodding farmer father simply a lazy fellow. The boy does not enthusiastically follow the plow and feed the cattle, and is scolded, punished and repressed. It may be true that he is lazy and fitted only for hard laboring. But he ought to be thoroughly understood first of all. His heart’s deepest aspirations, if he has such, should be sympathetically welcomed.

His sense of Divine mission for himself must be profoundly considered. He may have will enough to continue in spite of all opposition, but when too late it may be found he had not. There is no substitute for close comradeship with one's children to learn what is in their hearts, put there, it may be, by the spirit of God. The pastor and the church must develop this same close fellowship and comradeship with young people to save the best from life-long loss. How can the uneducated farmer father be expected to appreciate the child who at school, possibly by the touch of a splendid teacher, has been awakened to visions of a wonderful mission for which he has a strangely rich natural equipment? Or, how can the mother, however loving, who is bound to unending and life-crushing kitchen tools see what the child sees? Here is where the Church has a sublime mission in country homes to discover to the parents the real capacity and promise of their children, and thus to save these children from being irreparably wronged and the world robbed of its leaders. How beautiful in the life of Lincoln, the uncouth country boy, that his stepmother understood him! It is encouraging indeed that all over the land country pastors can tell stories of splendid discoveries of such boys and girls.

3. These coming men of power are often hidden in homes of wickedness. The saloon keeper's child, the drunken criminal's child

whose father and mother are often in jail, and the dissolute woman's child ought to be helped in Christlike compassion. These innocent ones suffer enough for the time not to have their whole life blasted by another's sin. The church which eagerly does such work has its reward not only in saving souls but in finding sometime a notable worker. Instances of men risen to prominence from such degradations are not proclaimed from housetops, for the men gladly throw a veil over such childhood, but every man who has come close to many great men knows several such cases. Enough to encourage every worker to gather all these children into church and the very babies upon the Cradle Roll.

4. They are often hidden under homely personal appearance or even repelling peculiarities. A distinguished pastor and educator was taken out of an orphanage because a kind-hearted woman decided to select the homeliest child there since no one else would be likely to want him. Another most brilliant scholar and pastor was repulsive with tiny eyes, great ugly nose, brick red hair, and queer head upon illshapen shoulders. He told me that when he took a new charge and walked up the aisle for the first time he could not help hearing involuntary exclamations, "My! What a homely man!" He said good-naturedly, and what a triumph it meant, "I pity the congregation when I rise and have to present such a face to them!" Think of the

fearful odds in the struggle that would accumulate. But he was a beautiful character later in life, a marvelous preacher, a great spiritual leader and a diamond of many facets of glory. There are others such in the village who are the butt of ridicule in general but who have souls of wonderful powers. In any case the homely children ought to be specially fathered and mothered by the church for tender love of Christ's sake.

5. In the better homes where parents are sincerely on the watch for their children's future there are perils for both parents and child. The danger of the fond parent's prepossession for the child toward a certain career instead of a study of the child's abilities and fitness. The father wants his boy to become his successor in a profession or in business, but God has another call for the boy. The pious mother consecrates her boy to the Christian ministry and is dismayed to find he feels God's call to another field. On the other hand there are all too few Christian mothers now consecrating their sons to the work of preaching the Gospel, for doubtless in most cases God inspired the mothers. The church may wisely teach the better way of seeking to know God's mission for every child. We will not lightly give up the ancient and comforting faith that God has a plan for every life in this world. What is it for the particular child? Children have been repressed and their real powers suppressed in good homes from religious motives

no less than in irreligious homes for sinful purposes.

II. Having found the diamond in the rough, what is the duty of the country church in polishing it? What is possible in training?

1. The use of colleges and technical schools by the church. There is no greater work the rural pastor can do than to direct his young people to higher schools for a larger education. He may create an atmosphere for college preparation in his little church. He may well become an enthusiast for the young people's education so that the close-fisted and plodding farmers will open to it, and all the people rightly estimate it. Who does not know that three or four times as many students might throng our colleges and universities as now attend if pastors in the country saw this opportunity for their young people?

2. Individual counsel in studies of earnest young people or by bringing educated people into friendly relations with them. There are many pastors who gladly become private tutors in their long leisure hours to the aspiring but poor young man. There are no happier experiences than years afterward to talk over these early efforts.

3. Organize Chautauqua Circles in the village or town. One small town is notable as having for many years had large circles and at times four circles in different churches. Other reading courses are helpful.

4. Institute a Bible study class, a Teacher Training class, and direct larger Bible reading in connection with prayer-meetings and public services. The teacher training movement is now sweeping the country, and it is no longer possible to object that it is impracticable in the country village or small town, for in hundreds of these places they have been in successful operation. Every such class a success means a new Sunday-school with real educational Bible work, spiritual ingathering, and character development. No meeting is so delightful nor so widely helpful in all church enterprise.

III. The placing of the leaders and workers is the final responsibility of the church, so fearful in its importance that Christ saw it, as noted before, and spent a whole night in prayer before he chose the twelve apostles. In earlier times the ordination of a pastor was preceded by fasting and prayer by the whole church. What shall we think then of church elections so flippant in spirit, so full of unworthy motives? Of elections to the Sunday-school Superintendency where low political tricks are used? Of bitter fights over the elections of trustees? There ought to be long prayer for God to choose and to send forth the man he selects. How beautiful the ancient Israelitish customs of God's call to king, prophet and leader. He promises to do it for the Church to-day.

I. This does not preclude the most thorough

consideration of the fitness of the candidate but it requires it. The office ought to be magnified in importance, intellectual and spiritual qualifications of the highest kind sought for it, and the best man always voted for in fear of God, for it is God's cause we are seeking to promote.

2. Regular terms for all officers are essential. Indefinitely continued Sunday-school officers, trustees, or deacons have crippled many churches beyond redemption. Some of these officers want to make a time record of a quarter century service, but they are seeking only a "time" record, not a record of real achievements. It seems to matter little that the church or the Sunday-school is sadly declining under their administrations, that no new people are being received, no ingathering, no spiritual results. It is enough for them to point to twenty-five years in that office, time, time, but little work done.

3. The work of men elected by prayer and wisdom should be appreciated by the church. Men have given twenty years of really good service and the church been blessed of God by them and no recognition of it is made. They step out of office and their successors are elected with only perfunctory thanks. The wise pastor will correct this neglect. Birthdays of good men furnish him a fine opportunity to call the church to honor him. There is no better way to promote earnest and faithful service.

"No man is born into the world whose work is not born with him."—LOWELL.

CHAPTER XXIV.

SPECIFIC ORGANIZATIONS IN THE COUNTRY CHURCH.

WE have now seen the gospel principles on which Christ organized the Church for work. These are her chart and constitution. Unless she steers closely by these she is adrift, near to perilous reefs, and will be long overdue, if not wrecked.

1. Preaching the gospel to every creature. In the distant world by intelligent personal responsibility of every member either to go, or to send aid by Scriptural offerings; in its immediate field by every member's personal work, and teaching all of Christ's truth.

2. Employing every member in Christlike breadth of work that will use all his talents.

3. Ministering effectively to every side of every man's nature.

4. Developing the resources of the church by the complete Scriptural principles.

5. Discovering leaders and workers, training and placing them.

These principles when realized constitute the powerful spiritual center in a thoroughly organized church.

Remember that as no army is organized until every enlisted soldier is in a definite company at a definite post with gun in hand and drilled; no factory organized until every workman is in a definite department at a designated work-bench, so no church can be overorganized or even fully organized while the members are unplaced at specific work for Christ.

Many societies, bands, leagues, associations are required by the fully organized local church, all strictly co-ordinated with the spiritual norm, and all contributing to church membership and success, instead of drawing away from the church as some Institutional work otherwise has done. The church should become a living spiritual organism in vital unity, however many and largely developed may be the auxiliary branches. It should not be a patchwork with little spiritual power, adding societies as fancy suggests another and another side of activity.

If every member of the church is to be placed at service according to his ability and every person helped according to his need, how many organizations will the local church require? One great church has sixty associations all in active success; some country churches have twenty-five to thirty.

We therefore study some specific organizations

now at work in country churches, more or less the natural outgrowth of the Scriptural principles before outlined.

I. The Sunday-school in modern efficiency. Barring all untried theories now we glance at what the Bible School to-day accomplishes.

1. If it is graded on psychological bases and has improved courses of Bible study, including both International Graded Lessons, memory and supplemental lessons, it will become the church's most helpful school of the Bible. The grading now includes as departments, the Cradle Roll for the infants, under three years of age who usually are unable to attend the school; this is the true infant class, spiritually cared for in many ways as Cradle Roll plans have shown. Next the Beginners' Department of children from three to six years, for whom a special course of lessons is provided. Then the Primary from six years to nine; next, the Junior from nine to twelve years; and the Intermediate from twelve to sixteen years; the Senior and Adult departments, all with special organization and lessons adapted to their needs. The Teacher Training department in the school itself, consists of young and old preparing to teach in the future, and the Teacher Training class meets during the week and consists of teachers now in service; both pursue the same special course of lessons upon the Bible, the school, the principles of teaching, and Sunday-school organization in some text-book selected

from many excellent ones now at hand. The Home Department provides for distribution of lessons to all who are unable to attend the school session and for some supervision at home.

This grading is possible and is done in many small country Sunday-schools of twenty-five to fifty enrolment. One class may form a department and have the graded lesson, and promotions be carefully made from class to class as departments. The schools which have conquered the initial difficulties have found it a power in Bible instruction.

2. Supplemental lessons include courses on Bible books and general contents, on Bible geography, doctrines, ethics; on church history and doctrines, missions, and on hand work. These supplemental lessons are developed in small booklets, are studied at home, and recited in the first five or eight minutes of the Sunday-school lesson period before going to the International lesson.

3. Teacher Training is successfully done in many country districts. The first man to complete the course in Pennsylvania is a country pastor, and he has carried several classes through the course in a farming district and small village.

4. Spiritual work can be planned through the teachers by careful preparation and personal work of the teachers before, at, and after a Decision or Confession day. In some cases these plans have reached and brought to Christ every unsaved scholar in the school.

5. The adult organized class movements, whether on Baraca and Philathea plans or others, have become the most popular movements of the day. The entrance of large numbers of men and women into active Sunday-school work has given the school new dignity and popularity.*

The church Sunday-schools are under the direct supervision of the church through its official session, council, quarterly conference or annual meetings of the congregation. The church sometimes supports the Sunday-school and then the school develops offerings, one or two a month for the local church, which train the scholars to become regular givers to the church. The returns from the Sunday-school are always more to the church treasury than the school costs.

We have elsewhere set forth the work of the Sunday-school in its ingathering plans and results,† and in other work along general lines in co-operation with the church. It would require a volume itself to detail the very remarkable improvements recently in Sunday-school organization, especially as inspired and effected by County and State Sunday-school organizations. One further illustration ought to be given. Fayette County, Pennsylvania, five years ago had 151 Sunday-schools with 13,996 enrolled, thirteen Cradle Rolls and eight Home Departments, the Sunday-schools containing only thirteen per cent.

* See Appendix for extended plans.

† Chap. XIX.

of the total population of the county. This was the lowest of any county in the State. Now there are 261 Sunday-schools with 33,000 enrollment which is fully 30 per cent. of the population, 136 Cradle Rolls, 98 Home Departments, 72 Teacher Training classes and about 60 adult organized classes. All these gains though by County Association work went directly to local schools and they were largely the work of one earnest man, Mr. B. S. Forsythe. The spiritual ingathering into churches has been correspondingly large all over the county. This wonderful result has been achieved by institutes, conventions, a large correspondence, a county school of methods for a week for two years, a state convention, and the field work of this earnest layman for a few years. This is a county almost wholly rural, coal mining in large part, and many sections chiefly with foreign people.

In general it will be found that when a Sunday-school is smaller than the church membership the church roll steadily decreases to the Sunday-school level. When the Sunday-school is twice as large as the church roll the church grows rapidly, and when the Sunday-school teaching is far below that of the public school the boys, young men and women leave the Sunday-school.

There are still thousands * of country sections,

* American Sunday-school Union missionaries and those of the great denominations estimate 25,000 to 30,000 such places in America.

some of them in the older States, where the small Sunday-school of twenty scholars or less is the only religious organization now possible. Here the Sunday-school, while adapting plans of thorough organization to local conditions, must feel its larger obligation to the religious needs of the sparsely settled region in which it works. These schools should make strenuous efforts to be "evergreen" schools, the suggestive name given by American Sunday-School Union workers to Sunday-schools open all the year. If it seems necessary to close in winter let the closed period be shortened year after year. It is all essential to set high standards of progress which are yet practical and attainable in its field. In these strictly Sunday-school fields of Christian work there may be isolated families reached by neighborly trips of the farm carriage or market wagon going for them. The plan of the consolidated public school in the country furnishing large wagons for routes may to some extent voluntarily be carried out for the Sunday-school.

As population increases these Sunday-school outposts of the coming church mature into well equipped churches. Pastors are called to serve them or appointed by the general church or Home Missionary society. But for a long time to come, so sparsely settled are vast stretches of great states, the Sunday-school must pioneer the Christianizing of great farming regions. It is important in these little schools that every good plan in

the Sunday-school movement of modern times that can possibly be used should be utilized. The Cradle Roll is always easy to organize, the Home Department is just what such communities will find helpful, and some grading is always possible with extra general lessons on the Bible and the Christian life. The blackboard may surely be used with maps, charts, and Bible pictures.

II. The Young People's Society. The various denominational movements like the Epworth League, the Baptist Young People's Union and others, with the Christian Endeavor which is found in all denominations, have achieved a really revolutionary work by young people in the church. They have changed the attitude of the general church to its young people, giving them special attention in all services and larger opportunity for service. But the young people's society continues the training school for church workers, and it has a specially fine opportunity in towns and villages. It develops many lines of mission work, benevolence, literary, and social work, and may be kept deeply spiritual. Its reading courses on church history and ethical problems, its splendid mission studies, and its various movements on mutual helpfulness and aggressive Christian life, like tithing, personal work, secret prayer, and mission work have been notable contributions to the local church. The rural church should have a live young people's society incorporating all good adjuncts of the movements at large. Their

meetings should be made especially attractive by well prepared singing and good leadership. The regular meeting will be most helpful during the week. For these societies, as for the Sunday-school, there is an abundant literature of methods of work.

III. Brotherhoods, as a new organization of men for men, have grown large and influential. They are social and spiritual and in notable instances have brought about great revivals gathering large numbers of men into the church. Their social features alone justify their existence. In one church a social was held after Sunday night service, and every stranger at once taken into the church family. Another brotherhood had a notable debating club on great moral and civic questions. The rural church in a town or suburb may develop a brotherhood which will increase the attendance of men upon church services and have an inspiring effect upon young men and boys. It will develop a body of men as personal workers.

IV. The King's Daughters is a society with a fine prestige from a general movement, in broad and practical lines of Christlike service. It becomes a rich blessing both to the circle and to the church. It will care for the sick, the poor, the neglected orphan, and do other spiritual and benevolent work.

V. Missionary Bands and societies in the local church are becoming well known. The Woman's Foreign and the Woman's Home auxiliaries, the

Children's Mission bands, and others are very helpful in developing the world-wide church consciousness. Sometimes the local society cares for a special worker or for a child in the mission field, and this gives definiteness and realism to the work.

VI. Children's Societies are many and are usually easy to organize, for children are eager to work for Christ in definite ways. The Junior Christian Endeavor and other Junior societies are fine training schools for child Christians. Mission Bands, sunshine circles, temperance societies, like the Band of Mercy and the Loyal Temperance Legion, are doing great service in many towns and villages but as yet a small proportion of the whole, and ought to be introduced everywhere.

VII. Boys' and Girls' Organizations. The boys and girls from nine to twelve years of age are specially fond of organization and there are many helpful societies planned for them which are popular, full of enthusiasm, and helpful in forming Christian character. See Appendix.

VIII. Intermediate organizations for young people from twelve years to sixteen have come into prominence in large numbers in recent years. The church has awakened to the consciousness of long neglect of youth in any effective way. Select such of this list as will employ all the young people. See list in Appendix.

IX. Ladies' Aid Societies are the most numerous and active, in all probability, of any outside

of the Sunday-school and Young People's Societies. Usually they are operated strictly for financial resources and their ability has saved many a struggling church from crushing burdens if not from extinction. There is often found a woman of exceptional business ability and here only has the church yet used her talents. In church building or improvements or in debt paying, or even in raising the pastor's salary in an emergency the "Ladies Aid" have notable records. In one case a society divided into circles of ten each, and each circle led by one of their number, worked various devices in a competitive way in a country church.

X. Ushers' Associations are so simple and immediately helpful they ought to be formed in every church. They give excellent culture to young men and add much to the comfort of strangers and regular attendants. They are often the means of beginning definite church work for many young men.

XI. Literary and Educational Work in the Country Church.

The best endeavor for the intellectual quickening of the church is the well-known Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle. It will interest high school and college graduates, well-educated school teachers, and all intelligent people old and young. Even a small group of church members and friends pursuing the course creates an atmosphere and sets a higher standard of reading and

thinking. In one town several churches had the C. L. S. C., and a local union was formed which built a Chautauqua Hall. The union insures a good attendance at high class lectures.

If there is a village or town literary society* the church will find it a helpful social and intellectual center. Debates on current questions of civic, social, or personal ethics are always very popular and are a fine development of moral character. Reading courses, mission study courses, and the C. L. S. C. may all be co-ordinated with the literary society for mutual helpfulness.

XII. Gymnasium classes. Some country churches in villages and towns, where no general gymnasium under other auspices exists, have begun one in partial furnishing with excellent results. It will be found everywhere of great value in character building and in reaching boys and young men for the church.

XIII. Special spiritual organizations in the country church. Cottage praying bands which hold prayer meetings in homes are of the highest value for the training of young converts and for aggressive evangelism. Only a leader and a secretary are required as officers with a membership of six to ten men. One church had three such bands constantly holding meetings in homes during the week or late Sunday afternoons. One band always sought for homes of non-Christian people, and the writer as a young man in that

* See Section II. Chap. XVII.

country church remembers the unusual spiritual power of those meetings. The fact of being in a non-Christian home was an inspiration to deeper earnestness and heightened interest.

Personal Workers' Circles of about five each are very helpful. These are connected in some instances, with the Adult Organized Bible Class, and are called "The Secret Service" because they pray for certain men agreed upon by themselves but not known to others, and pledge themselves to seek every opportunity to speak to them about personal salvation. The church at large is being aroused to the vital importance of such personal work. Rev. Dr. Russell H. Conwell, the noted Baptist pastor, states that 98 per cent. of his over five thousand accessions to his great church were brought in by personal work. Even where churches have large accessions in occasional sweeping revivals they would grow faster steadily by organized bands of personal workers and when the revivals came they would multiply many-fold the results. Every member of the church should be sought for personal spiritual work, the one thing which is most strictly Christlike work.

"Christian Conversation Classes" are a happy scheme by pastors in some towns. These classes study personal evangelism by Bible truth, and the methods of introducing Bible truth into social conversation. Dr. Trumbull's "Individual Work for Individuals," S. D. Gordon's "Quiet Talks," Dr. Weaver's "Christian Conversationalist"

and Moody's handbooks on Bible texts are used.*

Local Mission Sunday-schools are projected by little companies of workers from a church. There are many neglected neighborhoods where in schoolhouses or little village homes a Sunday-school may be started. This is excellent work, the very best possible work, at which to set young converts and promising young leaders.

In towns where many foreign people are congregating, young people should be set to studying their language and customs to do personal mission work among them. There are country churches doing this Christlike extension work.

Young Men's Christian Associations in twenty States are now conducting circuits of work for young men in towns and country places unable to support an association. One secretary supplies a dozen points in social, spiritual, and organizing service for men and boys. This is an opportunity of which many pastors and leaders in such towns may avail themselves.

Schemes of general Bible reading by the church are needed. We cannot have too much reading of it, if even we should get it re-opened in all public schools, and thoroughly taught in Sunday-schools; if we should succeed in reviving its teaching in all homes and its more scholarly study in colleges. All the more would

* See also Mead's "Modern Church Methods," Stall's "Church Methods," Reisner's "Workable Methods for Wide Awake Churches," Rice's "Handy Helps."

plans of reading it by the church be adopted and prosecuted!

(1) One pastor suggests for his church every winter some particular book like the Gospel of John or an Old Testament book of history or prophecy. His sermons then are frequently upon passages from John, his prayer-meeting talks are based upon the most interesting spiritual topics of that Gospel. In his pastoral visitation he discusses John with those who are reading the book. If it is a short book instead of John the next course is given in a month or two. He suggests helpful books for the family library upon the book read.

(2) Church Bible memory lessons are used by some pastors. Twenty choice Psalms are first taken up, the 1st, 2nd, 8th, 15th, 19th, 23rd, 51st, 65th, 90th, 91st, among others; the 12th, 35th, 53rd of Isaiah; passages from the Sermon on the Mount of five or six verses each; the parables of the Good Samaritan and the Prodigal Son; 1 Corinthians 13, and passages from other Epistles. These are recited in prayer-meetings and wonderfully enrich that service.

(3) Some pastors use the International Bible Reading Association which pursues a course of Daily Readings in connection with the International Sunday-school Lessons; the daily Bible readings of several Sunday-school magazines. If any of these are adopted they must be wisely related to the public services of the church

and observed as much as possible by all the people.

3. These schemes are an excellent beginning toward that comprehensive Bible work which the pastor and church should undertake. They must aim to give the whole Bible to the whole church. Fragmentary teaching of it by a verse here and there, and by unconnected brief prayer-meeting lessons cannot develop the fullest power of the church nor symmetrical Christian character in the people. It is a Providential movement, surely, in our day that has rescued the most neglected portions of the Bible like the Minor Prophets and the Acts of the Apostles, and fixed a very thorough study upon them in recent years. And these books of the Old Testament as well as the early history of the church have proven the most stirring messages to the sins and follies of the church to-day and inspiring calls to largest service. In the town church and in the suburb it is practicable in the course of five years, or even if it should be given ten years, to cover a comprehensive Bible study and teaching. The Sunday-school lessons may be co-ordinated with it, prayer-meeting lessons, pulpit themes and series of revival meeting messages all form a part of it.

The blessings of a Bible revival in the church are sure and immediate. It will fill the general field of conversation and drive out small talk and gossip. It will be sure to revive family religion and in many cases family worship. It

will erect standards for business, social life, and personal character. It will inspire to larger education, and indeed, it is the foundation of Christian civilization in all that is good and uplifting to mankind.



APPENDIX.

I. ADULT ORGANIZED CLASSES.

In the line of special work these organized classes can do there is an excellent summary in the "Pennsylvania Herald," February, 1909, by Dr. J. G. Huber of Harrisburg:

1. The Bible class may canvass the church and get every man to join the organization.

2. It may canvass the Sunday-school and invite every young man over sixteen to attend the meetings.

3. Canvass the neighborhood and secure unchurched men to affiliate with the class either in an active or an associate relationship.

4. Have careful oversight of the membership roll and operate a follow-up system for absent members.

5. It may arrange for weekly or monthly devotional meetings for men.

6. Occasionally conduct a public service in place of the regular preaching service, at which the laymen will speak on practical Christian subjects, such as "What I Should Do if I Were a Preacher," the preacher in turn speaking on the subject, "What I Should Do if I Were a Layman."

7. Plan for evangelistic meetings for men only. Thoroughly advertise them in the community with a view to securing the attendance of unchurched men.

8. Invite men and families to the regular Sunday services, and so increase the attendance.

9. Work for an increased interest and attendance at the regular weekly prayer-meeting by securing men to come and take part.

10. Co-operate systematically in revival efforts.

11. Stand by the minister and church officers in every forward movement of the congregation.

12. Give occasional social functions in order to enlarge and increase the acquaintance of the organization with the men of the Sunday-school and community.

13. Make visiting men and boys feel at home at the church services.

14. Secure the names of strangers in the community and in attendance at the church services, and manifest a religious interest in them.

15. Have the men's organization plan the annual Sunday-school and church picnic, or outing, and provide music, games, refreshments, etc.

16. Once or twice a year invite the entire church to be the guests of the men's organization, the men to furnish both the program and simple refreshments. This will give the sisters a well-deserved and greatly appreciated rest.

17. Have a social occasion for the discussion of matters of local and general interest, inviting as a special guest a returned missionary, some general officer of the church, or others.

18. Give a reception to the minister.

19. Visit the sick and needy, and manifest practical sympathy and help in time of need and affliction.

20. Make the minister's Sunday sermons and services special subjects of prayer.

21. Pursue a series of studies in personal work, together with constant endeavor to lead men to Christ.

22. Plan and conduct a series of Bible studies at weekly meetings. The demand in some places is for a plan of Bible study differing from that of the International Sunday-school lessons.

23. Help to interest the men of the church in the work of the Sunday-school. Arrange for lectures on Bible study and travels in Bible lands.

24. Form mission study classes, and so disseminate facts and create a missionary interest.

25. Secure and furnish a reading-room for men and boys of the church and community. This is especially necessary in a town where there is no Y. M. C. A.

26. Provide lectures, books or library for the intellectual improvement of men.
27. Drive a wedge into the monotony of preaching by holding open-air meetings during the summer months.
28. Be responsible for a mission Sunday-school in the community, or do some definite work abroad.
29. Engage earnestly in all movements of civic reform.
30. Supplement the home in providing for boys and young men the means of recreation and amusement, and see that they are led into a Christian life.
31. Help men to discover themselves and realize their highest possibilities in Christian usefulness.
32. Create in men a consciousness of the mission of their denomination in the world and promote loyalty in the denomination.
33. One class held a reception Election night near where the returns were displayed and served coffee and buns to the waiting men.
34. Another whose pastor was on a circuit offered to pay additional support to have him all the time and succeeded.
35. Another gave baskets to the poor at Christmas.
36. Organize glee clubs or evangelistic singing, male quartettes and choruses.

II. BOYS' AND GIRLS' ORGANIZATIONS.

1. Junior Baraca, M. A. Hudson, Syracuse, N. Y.
 2. Junior Philathea, M. A. Hudson, Syracuse, N. Y.
 3. Boys' Brigade, United Boys' Brigade of America.
91-93 Wall St., N. Y.
 4. Boys' Life Brigade, Andrew Melrose, 16 Pilgrim St.,
London, E. C. England.
- For those who do not like the military drill. This is a life-saving drill and training.
5. Anti-Cigarette Society, Miss Lucy Page Gaston, The
Temple, Chicago.
 6. Band of Mercy, 19 Milk St., Boston, Mass.
 7. Girls' Sunshine Band, Edith M. Balch, Burlington, Vt.
 8. Messenger Department, Rev. Joel Harper, 1356 Marion
St., Denver Colo.

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|---------------------------------|----------------|------------|
| 9. Mission Bands,
Societies. | Denominational | Missionary |
|---------------------------------|----------------|------------|
10. Boys' Camps and Camping. " (How to Camp) " Henry F. Burt, Pillsbury House, Minneapolis, Minn.
 11. The Junior Grange, N. J. Batchelder, Concord, N. H.
 12. Lincoln Legion, Anti-saloon League, 103 E. 125 St., N. Y.
 13. Boys' Whistling Club, Grant O. Tullar, 150 Fifth Ave., N. Y.
 14. Nature Study, Bird Classes, Chester A. Reed, Worcester, Mass.
 15. Knights of the Holy Grail, Rev. Perry E. Powell, Garrett, Ind.
 16. Junior Christian Endeavor, Tremont Temple, Boston, Mass.
 17. Knights of the Silver Cross, White Cross, 224 Waverly Place, N. Y.
 18. The George Junior Republic, Wm. R. George, Freeville, N. Y.
 19. Boyville, Near Cleveland, Ohio.
 20. Nature Study Clubs, The Agassiz Ass'n, H. H. Ballard, Pittsfield, Mass.
Handbook " Three Kingdoms " 75c.
 21. Clan Gordon, (religious) Rev. Granville R. Pike, Eau Claire, Wis.
(List of Thomas Chew, Fall River, Mass, in part.)

III. YOUNG PEOPLE'S ORGANIZATIONS.

1. Brotherhood of St. Andrew, Hubert Carleton, Broadway Exchange Bldg., Boston.
2. Woodcraft Indians, Y. M. C. A. 124 East 28th St., New York.
3. Brotherhood of David, Rev. Frank L. Massoch, Potsdam, N. Y.
4. Order of the Triangle, Eugene C. Foster, care of Y. M. C. A., Detroit, Mich.
5. Boys' Class of Bible School Cadets, J. H. Elliott, Des Moines, Iowa.

6. Temple Builders, Colo. State S. S. Association, Denver, Colo.
7. The Quest of the Holy Grail, Rev. H. H. Meyer, 150 Fifth Ave., New York.
8. The Knights of Valor, Rev. J. A. Duff, D. D., Aspinwall, Pa.
9. Knights of King Arthur, F. L. Massock, Potsdam, N. Y.
10. Kings' Daughters and Sons. Mrs. M. L. Dickinson, 156 Fifth Ave., New York.
11. Dorcas Circle,
12. Queen Esther Circle.
13. I. A. H. Circle (for girls) D. C. Cook, Elgin, Ill.
14. Elder Brother Organization, Rev. W. M. Smith, D. D. East 57th St., New York.
15. Loyal Temperance Legion, The Temple, Chicago, Ill.
16. White Shield League, Eaton & Mains, 150 Fifth Ave., New York, N. Y.
17. The Chautauqua Junior Naturalists Club, Ithaca, N. Y.
18. Civic Co-operation Association, R. D. Routsaln, Municipal Museum, Chicago, Ill.
19. Quest of the White Shield, Rev. E. M. Waring, Williamsport, Ind.
20. Knights of the Church, D. C. Cook, Elgin, Ill.
(List of Mr. Frank L. Brown, Brooklyn, N. Y.)



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