

will not bind together and build up the country church. Under the system of non-resident pastors, the rural churches have languished and died.

The meagre and inadequate support of the country pastor by the country church has contributed to the decline. The rural church does little toward furnishing a living support for its ministry. The farmer has had wrought into his consciousness the slogan, "Raise at home what you consume." He lives largely out of his smoke-house and stored bins. The output of money for the support of his family is much less than that required for the average. He has provided for the preacher on the basis of his own outlay, paying him approximately five hundred dollars per annum, not realizing that, where himself draws from bounty stored up, his preacher must buy in paper sacks at the retail price. The result of this inadequate support is that the country church has crowded back from its pulpit talent that could have been easily commanded.

The resuscitation of the country church is fraught with grave problems and difficulties. The key man in the situation is the pastor. The burden of leadership and execution falls upon him. As some one of experience remarks, "It is far easier to be an acceptable and popular pastor in the town and city than it is to be a constructive and aggressive leader in the country field."

There is room for a largeness of service by the country church to its community. In such services the preacher is wholly justifiable in his leadership and activity so long as he makes community betterment subservient to the prime end of his ministry. Everything that enhances the community's welfare ministers directly or indirectly to the church's building.

The country pastor may prove very helpful to the farmer by inciting him to seek a more thorough and scientific information in his calling. He may induce him, with great profit, to subscribe for some of the best farm journals which bristle with facts and suggestions, and to read them diligently: to peruse the State and National bulletins, which, in the main, may be had for the asking, and are scientific and practical; to attend lectures and institutes conducted by trained and experienced men; to try out feasible methods of fertilization and farming; to co-operate in producing and marketing crops. If the pastor can prove himself sympathetic and helpful to his parishioners in the daily program of toil, he has thereby strengthened the point of contact and the way is made easier for a greater helpfulness in the religious life. If the individual purse is swelled by means of such interest and assistance, by so much does the church profit in its own maintenance, its increased gifts to charities and benevolences, and its richer service to the community.

The country pastor may be very helpful in building up the rural school, in the choice of teachers, and in improving the curriculum. Rural schools, equipped to do thorough work, will accomplish a great deal toward holding the very best families to the country church.

The country pastor may prove very helpful in agitating good roads movements, for the better the roads, the more insistent may be the appeal for regular church attendance. He may agitate with benefit to the church better home-making. The ruralist is awakening to the fact that he has not had the comforts of home to which he is entitled, and the country homes are beginning to be equipped with many comforts and some luxuries. Comfortable and

attractive homes make for the permanency of the constituency of the country church.

There is need of a new emphasis in the country church as to its work and worship.

Rural surveys have accomplished much in bringing to light salient facts touching the life and needs of communities. Every church undertaking a work in a community should first of all institute a survey of the conditions. By this method the leaders get their bearings, they know more definitely what is to be accomplished, and a frequent aimlessness, inefficiency, and squandering of time is obviated.

Attention to the worship and work of the church and its organizations will greatly aid in giving the country church its place of wanted power and service in the community.

Every country church or group of churches should be supplied with regular preaching of the word by a resident pastor. The country churches suffer from a lack of supply. During the time of the vacancy, the life of the church languishes, and by the time the preacher is secured and settled, the last estate of the church is worse than the first. The church courts may and should see that every church within their jurisdiction is supplied with regular ministrations of the word. But the preaching of the word alone will not avail in the resuscitation of the country church; the pastor must be a resident of the church or the group, he must visit the membership and know them on their estates and in their homes in order that he may be sympathetic and helpful, and, by his precept and example, lead them into Christ-like living.

The worship of the rural church lacks dignity and action. It strikes the observer as something that happens haphazard and is without that care and thoroughness in its preparation that lend stateliness and dignity, that command attention and inspire reverence. If the worship be dignified it must not be so to the sacrifice of life and movement. Men who have toiled in the open on Saturday, relax in the seat of the sanctuary on the Sabbath. If the worship is dull and drags, relaxation soon passes into oblivious lassitude and lassitude hastily merges into restful sleep.

Country folk like and demand good preaching. They do not attend church to display their Paris gowns and the nobbiest work of the milliner's art, but rather to feast their souls on the strong meat of spiritual truth. Country people in years ago demanded oratory in the pulpit, but not so now. They are content and satisfied with the unadorned truth given in such form that they may receive it, appropriate it, and practically apply it in their lives. The ruralist church attendant is keen to discern whether he is being urged to acquire a more Christ-like life upon the strength of hollow and inane exhortations or is being fed upon nourishing truth which naturally promotes growth.

The religious revival has its place in the building up of the country church. Not infrequently the wheels of the machinery, long at a standstill, have been set agoing through the agency of a protracted meeting.

The country church is calling for a more conservative type of evangelism than it has had in the past. Emotionalism has lost its primacy. Evangelization that is peculiar to one sect or denomination, that tests every religious experience by its own shibboleth, is passing rapidly into desuetude. It is demanding an evangelism that is pitched upon the broadest basis, an evangelism that seeks to bring men, unfettered and free, to the feet of the Saviour.

The membership of the country church during the year gets far behindhand with "goin' to meeting," and nothing short of a series of services will enable it to overtake a need felt mentally and spiritually. On such occasions, what keen and delightful interest is manifested! How speedily the people despatch the home chores and brush away every impeding obstacle that not one season of worship be missed!

The Sabbath-school holds a most important place in its relation to the country church. The churches are usually grouped with others and each cannot have the preached word every Sabbath. On the days that the pastor is absent, the Sabbath-school, for the most part, in practice if not in theory, substitutes the morning worship. In the country church greater urgency should be brought to bear that the Sabbath-school attain its ideal, namely, "The church met together for the study of God's word." In view of the little time given to Bible study, the scarcity of commentaries and helps, the appalling need in the country for a better acquaintance with the contents of the Bible, the Sabbath-school should be more fully equipped and pressed into a larger service for the church.

The country church needs to be trained prayerfully and patiently in systematic and proportionate giving. The financial side of the country church is its weakest. The ruralist gives of his means sparsely and spasmodically. The average gift is one-half of one per cent of the income. He has never been trained in Christian stewardship. The farmer has accumulated his treasure by dint of hard licks and rigid economy. His savings have been added to little by little. He knows to contribute to the advancement of Christ's kingdom only as he has saved for himself, a very little at one time.

The country church has no system of finance. The prevailing system is that of "letting things go until necessity compels action." The church then passes through the rigors of a financial spasm, the bulk of present need is provided for, a cessation of activity immediately ensues, and a peaceful calm prevails until dire distress again forces to action.

The country church needs to be instructed in Christian stewardship and led to adopt a scriptural method of finance. It is a work that requires tactful, patient, and prayerful handling. The inimical feeling persistently dwells in the ruralist's breast that any new method of finance projected is but an adroit scheme, designed rather to rob him of his riches than to enrich his soul toward God. Withal, the country church can be trained to give systematically and proportionately. When the light of duty and privilege once dawns upon its membership, none are more loyal and joyful in worshipping God with their substance.

The country church needs ever to have conspicuously before it a vision of its broad and far-reaching mission of service to the worldwide kingdom of Christ. It stands far removed from the sisterhood of churches, and, in its isolation, is prone to shrink back in timidity, conceiving itself to be an institution which must be molly-coddled and carried rather than a part of the church militant commissioned with a definite work and charged with a grave responsibility in bringing the whole wide world to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. The country church needs the clear vision of itself marching in the great galaxy of churches armed and equipped for sacrificial service and satisfied with nothing short of achieving its rightful share in the