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THE CHRISTIAN EDUCATION OF AMERICAN CHILDREN.

BY REV. LUTHER ALLAN WEIGLE, Ph. D., D. D.,
Sterling Professor of Religious Education, Yale University.

This article has been made up by combining portions of two lectures selected from a series of eight lectures delivered by Dr. Weigle the last of January, 1925, on the James Sprunt Foundation. All eight lectures are soon to appear in book form under the title, "The Christian Education of American Children." This book, we venture to predict, will be accepted as a leading authority on the vital subject it discusses with such remarkable breadth and penetration.—Editor.

The issues involved in the mutual relations of religion and education confront the present generation with a problem that is world-wide and of the utmost significance. The growing divorce between education and religion is in the judgment of many clear-sighted and responsible men one of the primary causes for the present distraught condition of the world. They

But the true religion is not a series of guesses at truth: "We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen."

"Be ye, therefore, steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord."

IV. *What the encouragement to doing the work of the Lord?*

Doing the right thing—abounding in the work of the Lord—will bring even in this life its own reward, the approval of a good conscience; and not only so, it will bring ultimately the crown of life which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give in that day. Christ lives. He assures us that we shall live, that this corruption shall put on incorruption and this mortal put on immortality. The believer in Christ is to live, serve and enjoy in a state of perfect bliss forever.

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye be steadfast; unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not vain in the Lord."

THE CHALLENGE OF THE COUNTRY CHURCH.

BY REV. HENRY W. McLAUGHLIN, D. D.,
Pastor of New Providence Presbyterian Church, Raphine, Va.

The 1923 General Assembly of the Southern Presbyterian Church appointed an Ad-Interim Committee on the Country Church composed of Rev. W. H. Mills, D. D., of Clemson College, S. C., as chairman, the writer as secretary, and Mr. F. S. Neel, of Charlotte, N. C. The General Assembly in San Antonio continued it for another year. We have been carrying on an investigation for more than eighteen months with a view to discovering the problems of the Country Church, and how they may be solved, the conditions now existing, and how they can be improved.

In the confines of this article we shall undertake to set down

some of our findings, and to record our convictions as to the way in which conditions may be bettered and the problems solved in the rural communities of our Southland.

The members of the committee were already familiar with country conditions in circumscribed territories, but have had to revise some of their notions after this more extended study. We have investigated by personal visitations, by conferences, and by sending questionnaires to the stated clerks, the country pastors, the Synodical Superintendents, the leading city pastors and others. Last August this committee spent four busy days in conference with the General Assembly's Advisory Home Mission Council at Montreat. We have discovered at least some of the things that constitute a challenge to the Church as a whole and to our ministers and theological students in particular.

1. *The Challenge of a Crying Need.*

This article would be too long if we undertook to make a full discussion of the subject. We will therefore have to be content in confining ourselves to just one of the outstanding problems of the Country Church. It is the problem which is at the base of all the others. *It is to find men who are willing to give their lives to the rural fields.* This is our own conviction sustained by the testimony of the brethren. In a letter from Rev. Brooks I. Dickey, D. D., Superintendent of Home Missions of the Synod of Texas, dated February 13th, 1925, he has this to say: "The chief problem of the country churches to my mind is that we have no men to supply them. In the first place we do not have enough men to fill our churches; in the second place we have practically no men who are willing to go into the country to live. It is my conviction that no church can thrive or grow without a resident minister. Until some method is discovered by which we can get them supplied, I have no light to offer."

Rev. B. R. Lacy, D. D., pastor of Central Presbyterian Church, Atlanta, in answer to the question, "What solution

have you to offer for the country church problem?" writes: "(a) The securing of preachers who will go to the country fields and stay there long enough to do a real work. (b) Organizing of preaching points in the open country instead of at little railroad stations and towns. (c) City churches feeling definite responsibility for contiguous territory; for example, the work around Raleigh, N. C., in the last fifteen years."

Rev. J. H. Henderlite, D. D., Gastonia, N. C., writes: "A more alert and responsive leadership, with a more aggressive and modern program." Hear the testimony of Rev. Samuel M. Glasgow, D. D., pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, Knoxville, Tenn., who had a Home Missionary experience. He says: "Strong co-operation and help from nearby city churches; well built and equipped manses; increased salaries for country ministers; routing more Assembly and secretarial speakers through the country districts and churches; and guiding Seminary graduates into such fields with probability of sustained service there."

Rev. C. H. Williamson, D. D., pastor of First Presbyterian Church, Memphis, Tenn., says: "I see no hope for the country church apart from the leadership of men especially trained for rural life work. It is a community job and we must have a special course of training for such men and women. It has now a missionary call and task."

Rev. Thomas K. Young, D. D., pastor of First Presbyterian Church of Roanoke, Va., in answer to the same question, writes: "(a) Strong, virile preachers of the pure Gospel, only this will supply an accurate vision of life's relationships and responsibilities. (b) Better physical equipment and a larger social program."

Rev. Frederick H. Barron, D. D., pastor of Davis Memorial Church, Elkins, W. Va., a nestor in Home Missions, testifies as follows: "The country school teacher is paid very poorly, and so the country schools take what the others do not want: the minister is poorly paid, and so the country church is penalized in many cases by getting inferior ministers. If

we want to keep the people on the farms let us give them the best doctors, preachers, and school teachers."

Rev. T. P. Allen, Secretary of Stewardship for the Synod of West Virginia, writes that what we need "is a more intensive and productive study of the rural problems in our seminaries, and a more definite effort to commit our ministerial students to the rural church as a life work."

Rev. Oliver G. Jones, D. D., Regional Evangelist Presbyterian Church, United States, Superintendent of Home Missions and Evangelism of the Synod of Mississippi, who is as well qualified by his experience to speak on this subject as any man in our Assembly, says, speaking of conditions in Mississippi: "One hundred and one of our churches are out in the country, nearly every one of which is weak and struggling, many of them only supplied occasionally with preaching. Only one has a preacher for all the time. For the last ten years our country churches have lost in membership and influence, and many of them, though needed in the communities in which they are located, are ready to be dissolved. As to the question, 'What constitutes some of your problems of the country church?' I would say, difficulty of properly grouping them and of securing efficient men who are willing to give their lives to this work.

In this state the preachers of all denominations no longer live with their people of the country churches. They live in towns, and go back and forth to do the work, and this work is for the most part just supplying the pulpit. They are not in touch with their young people enough to direct them or to be of vital influence in the community life.

We should visit the seminaries and lay the call of *the country church* on their hearts, and try to select the best men for the work. We should erect inexpensive buildings, and economize in everything but the personnel of the ministry. If the other synods have anything like the problems that we have, we need to lay our hands on one man whose heart would be in the work, and who would feel deeply his responsibility before God, and let him have as his one work the problems of the

country church. This man could go to the city churches and arouse and enlist their interest in the country church, for before him he would have, in every city church, 75 per cent of its successful professional and business men, those who had been reared in the little country churches. This man could also visit the colleges and seminaries, and keep before the young women and men and our student preachers the call of the country church."

Dr. R. L. Telford, chairman of the Synodical Home Mission Committee of the Synod of Kentucky, after a careful conference with his committee on this subject, writes: "Only a resident pastor can hold together and build up the country church. We find great difficulty in securing pastors for our country churches, as nearly all of our young men want town or city churches."

The above are only a few of the testimonies of our best men concerning a need which challenges. It was this which led the last General Assembly meeting in San Antonio, Tex., to recommend "that the faculties of our Theological Seminaries be urged to stress country work and to dignify it in the eyes of the students, and to lay upon the hearts of our choicest young men the call to consecrate their lives definitely to this sphere of service just as some devoted their lives to the foreign field."

Most men who enter Rural and Home Mission work approach it differently from the way ministers do other fields. The man who becomes a foreign missionary does so because he is a volunteer for that form of work; men who become evangelists do so because they prefer the evangelistic door; ministers who become teachers do so because it is their chosen line of endeavor; and our city preachers occupy their positions because a city charge has been their choice. Many of those who enter Home Mission and Rural work do so because there is no other kind of field open to them. It is not because it is their choice of work; they look upon it as a makeshift until something better opens or as a spring-board into a city pulpit. We will never solve the Home Mission and Country Church problem till we have men in the ministry who will give themselves in a

Christ-like spirit to this field of service. It has been a motto of the Moravian Church in choosing fields for missionary endeavor, "We will go where no one else will."

2. *The Challenge of a Big Opportunity.*

The opportunities of a field do not always consist of the number of people living in it, but upon the percentage of the population not reached by other denominations. The opportunities of a field do not always consist in a large number of people unreached by other churches, but in the number who will hear our preaching. A man may feel that he is going to a field of great opportunity because it has in it 10,000 unreached people, but if he is able to preach to only fifty persons, a community of 1,000 offers an eight-fold bigger opportunity, provided he can preach to 400 of the 1,000. The opportunity of a field does not always consist of the number who hear, but in the potentiality of the lives of those who come under the influence of the minister. Judged by all these standards, the country church is pregnant with opportunities.

As the other denominations get more highly educated ministers, the tendency is to develop the work on the boulevard and neglect the country population. With highly organized methods all of the denominations are doing a more thorough work in the cities, but are more and more neglecting the country. There is a much larger per cent of country homes untouched by any religious worker than is found in the city. On the other hand, it is much easier to get a good hearing in the country than in the city, because there are not so many counter attractions, such as moving pictures, Sunday ball games, parks, etc. There is a better chance of preaching to 40 per cent of the population in the country than to 5 per cent in the city.

The country boys and girls today are the leaders of thought and action in the progress of the world tomorrow. Some months ago a picture of President Coolidge and his Cabinet appeared in the *Literary Digest*, and of the men in this picture all were reared on a farm in the open country except Charles Hughes,

Secretary of State. Mr. Hughes is the son of a Baptist minister.

A few years ago Judge A. G. Dayton, who was on the Federal bench in West Virginia, told me an interesting tale of his days in Congress. One day when he found that the janitor had installed some liquid soap in the members' lavatory, he remarked, "This looks like home-made soap." Another Congressman then said, "What do you know about home-made soap?" He answered, "I know all about it; I made it when I was a boy." He said this led to a comparison of notes, and of those present at the time, among them being the chairmen of nearly every leading committee in Congress, it was found that they all hailed from the country and had made home-made soap excepting one.

Who can estimate the influence of the Scotch preachers, Rev. James Thomas and Rev. Archibald Campbell, upon the construction of our American institutions and the establishment of the Federal Constitution. They were the teachers and spiritual advisors of the country lad, John Marshall. Senator Albert Beveridge, in his monumental work of four volumes on John Marshall, says: "Lucky for John Marshall and this country that he was not city born and bred; lucky that not even the small social activities of a country town drained away a single ohm of his nervous energy or obscured with lesser pictures the large panorama which accustomed his developing intelligence to look upon big and simple things in a big and simple way." When John was about twelve to fourteen, James Thomas lived in the home of Thomas Marshall. Mr. Beveridge says: "The young Scotch deacon returned Thomas Marshall's hospitality by giving the elder children such instruction as occasion offered, as was the custom of parsons, who always were teachers as well as preachers. We can imagine the embryo clergyman instructing the elder son under the shade of the friendly trees in pleasant weather or before the blazing logs in the great fireplace when winter came. While living with the Marshall family, he doubtless slept with the children in the half-loft of that frontier dwelling." The preachers who min-

ister to the lads and lassies in the country today shape the destinies of the nation of tomorrow. If Samuel Davies had not preached to a country boy by the name of Patrick Henry, American history might have been far different from what it is.

Our investigations show that 63 per cent of our leading city preachers come from the country churches, and about 42 per cent of the city elders and 39 per cent of the city deacons. At the present time about 63 per cent of our population is urban and 37 per cent rural. There is spent in the city churches about six times as much money for physical equipment as in the country, and over four times as much is paid for pastors' salaries in the cities as in the country. There is no way to measure the efficiency of the men laboring in the cities with those laboring in the country, but it seems that most of the strong men go to the city. Just about half of the candidates for the ministry today hail from the country. It takes six times more money in physical equipment, four times more in pastors' salaries, and no one knows how much more diligent work to produce one candidate for the ministry in the city than in the country. Is not this true in other dividends of the Master's Kingdom? The country field offers a challenge of a big opportunity. Where will you invest your life?

3. *The Challenge of a Difficult Task.*

The charge has been made that young men are deterred from entering the ministry because of the hardships, deprivations, and small financial remunerations of a minister's life. I believe it is a slander on the young manhood of the Presbyterian Church. We cannot think that the men who answered the call four million strong to give their lives on a foreign field, for Country would be thus deterred from entering the service of the Church. They did not ask, "Will I have an easy time?" "Will I be cold or hungry or tired?" or "How much money will my country give me?" No, they said, "My life belongs to my country and I am willing not only to suffer, but to die if need be." A young soldier who had his arm torn from its

socket heard some one say, "What a pity he lost his arm," and his answer was, "I did not lose my arm, I gave it for France." A true man loves the challenge of a difficult task.

There are real hardships in the country and Home Mission fields, and there is no use in denying it. This should appeal to rather than to deter a minister of Christ. When one of our greatest ministers had just accepted a call, he said to me, "I accepted this call because I was told that it is the most difficult field in our Assembly." Red-blooded American men like the challenge of a hard job. These hardships belong to the average country and Home Mission field, and not necessarily to a favored church like the one of which I am pastor. The isolation from other ministers, scattered population, multiplicity of preaching points, bad roads, poor schools, belated mails, lack of cultural environments, want of the help of a trained leadership, poor and tardily paid salary, constitute a few of the rural hardships. The country preacher may have to feed his own horse, mend his own car, or milk his own cow, and some have done the family washing. He may be compelled by stern necessity to discover that there is as much fun in wielding an ax as a tennis racket, and that a garden hoe is as much of a muscle builder as a golf-stick. It takes a brave man to face all of these, but when you stop to analyze them, they are the things that constitute part of a need. Many of these very conditions can be improved by the work of the minister himself. The hardest thing to bear is the stigma of being a "Home Mission" or "country" preacher. The return of a foreign missionary is something like that of a conquering hero, and the city preacher gets in the headlines on the front page of the newspaper, while the doings of the country pastor, if noticed at all, are crowded down among the death notices. All of these things are terribly galling to the man who is in this kind of work just because he can't help himself, or because it seems that he is not wanted in any other place. It is quite different with the man who has consecrated his life to this form of service as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. Such a one, like the

!

Apostle Paul, will glory in his necessities. There is a halo about a service that is done in sacrificial love for Christ.

There are home missionaries and country preachers whose eyes are so occupied with the task to which they feel divinely called, that they cannot see the difficulties and hardships. They are happy in their work. They are the men who have given their lives as definitely to this form of service as others have to the Foreign Field.

Following the footsteps of his sainted father, who saw Mt. Carmel Church in Virginia under his ministry grow from a feeble band to one of the greatest country churches of the Assembly, Rev. Harry Hamilton, of Texas, has refused many invitations to move. He replies, "God called me to be a home missionary."

Probably the most thrilling moment of the recent convention of the "Men of the Church" in Roanoke, was when Rev. Frank E. Clark, who has for seventeen years been a home missionary in Buchanan County, Va., with the thrilling accents of an oratory born of conviction, said, "I would rather occupy the position of a home missionary in Buchanan County than occupy any pulpit in the land. I would not exchange places with any man I know."

The real solution to the rural problem is for men of ability, recognizing the needs, the importance, and the hardships of the task, to give themselves to it. It is sometimes difficult to get the country churches to call men of real ability, for they say, "He will not come to us, and if he comes he will not stay." One of our largest country churches recently called one of our ablest young ministers just because it was learned that he had definitely consecrated his life to the work in God's open. The problems of the country church will be solved when, and only when, a sufficient number of our best men so devote their lives to it because they have the conviction that it is the mind of the Master for them.