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The problem of the church in the rural community

Grade 80 Jour B.

THE PROBLEM OF THE CHURCH IN THE RURAL COMMUNITY.

A THESIS.

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J. Adams Oakes.

The Problem of the Church in the Rural Community.

In 1620 a shipload of immigrants landed at Plymouth, passed a satisfactory examination before the Commission on Immigration, and landed. They found a pile of Indian corn under the snow, shot some turkeys, caught some fish, and settled down to getting acquainted with the neighbors. They taught their children to shoot a gun, read the Bible, write a letter, and make a living. That was some time ago, but the other day I read that Mrs. Russell Sage had given $500,000 to furnish Bibles enough to go round; I notice that my Uncle Sam is getting poor on carrying so many letters for the boys and girls who have grown up since the time of the Mayflower; and I am of the impression that some folks are making a rather neat living since we arrived. We have an estate here on this side of the Atlantic and between Canada and Mexico of 3,028,789 square miles. We had a $400,000 fire the other day in Detroit, 21 fire companies were in attendance, and 40,000 people stood in the rain to watch it, but the insurance company pays the damages and the most of us hardly know that there was a loss. Why should we? In 1904 we were worth $107,104,000,000 and last year we had in circulation $3,108,240,657, besides $8,611,982,406 that we had in the bank. That was before we had sold our $8,760,000,000 worth of farm products or our $14,802,147,087 worth of manufactured products. We bought from other countries to the extent of $1,311,920,224, and sold them $1,663,011,104 worth of goods. That was a fairly good thing for a handful of 88,000,000 immigrants to do in comparison with the 400,000,000 folks in China and the 300,000,000 in India and the 160,000,000 in Africa and the hundreds of millions in other countries who are living where they did not have to go abroad to be at home.

I think it is of some consequence to be living in the

land where men get a start and don't stop going until they arrive. Just think of what farmers and miners and drovers and millers and manufacturers and railroaders we are. In a single year we produce $94,660,000 in gold, $28,050,600 in silver, 363,322,363 tons of coal, 15,936,018 tons of pig iron, 14,023,247 tons of steel, 420,791 tons of copper, 328,110,749 pounds of wool, 737,189,000 bushels of wheat, 2,772,376,000 bushels of corn, 10,363,240 bales of cotton, 1,203,075,000 pounds of tin plate, and 7,542,044,118 gallons of petroleum. We stir into our coffee and other eatables and drinkables 7,288,425,844 pounds of sugar, and go out in the morning and feed our 69,000,000 cattle and 21,000,000 horses and 57,000,000 sheep and 4,000,000 mules, and 48,000,000 hogs, to say nothing of rubbing down our automobiles. We read the news from the other parts of the farm in one or more of our 23,000 newspapers, and then mother gets ready our ~~17,373,852 little brothers and sisters and sends them~~ to the primary school, 961,786 boys and girls get themselves ready and go to the intermediate grades and the high school, 149,700 sons and daughters start out for the class room at the college or university, 63,256 young men and women pursue their work at the professional school, 70,000 go to Normal, and in the course of the day about 728,000 drop around at the night school or the business school or the reform school or the school for the deaf or the school for the blind or the school for the feeble-minded or the Indian school or the mission school or the orphanage or the private kindergarten or the music school or the school of oratory or the school in domestic science, and Father goes to the school of experience and foots the bills for the rest. In the evening they come home, about 20,000,000 of them, twenty per cent of the family,- been learning their reading and writing and arithmetic, and a few other things.

That is a snapshot of the family of my Uncle Samuel. Just 290 years ago there were about 40 heads of families to start with. We can all shoot our own guns and take care of our-

selves, like our fathers taught us; we can write letters by proxy or by short hand; we can make a living for ourselves and send something over to the neighbors. But how about reading the Bible? There is no doubt but that we have made a success of ourselves in other ways, but have we become well enough acquainted with the Book? There are 20,000,000 of us going to secular schools of one kind and another for five days in the week, and there are 15,000,000 of us that go to Sunday School once a week if it don't rain or if it is not too nice a day to stay in.

But we ought not to complain too much; at least not until we have looked at the matter a little. In 1780 Robert Raikes organized the first Sunday School, in Gloucester, England. In 1786 Bishop Francis Asbury started one in Hanover County, Va. That was only 130 years ago, and now we have about 192,300 Sunday Schools in this country, together with about 1,746,000 officers and teachers and 15,000,000 scholars. Here the boys and girls who attend hear the stories of the Bible, get a glimpse into the lives of David and Jonathan and Samuel and Daniel and Moses and Paul and Peter and Jesus. Get a glimpse, I say, and then I ask the question, Is the Sunday School of any consequence? Let us see. Can we have a Church without a Sunday School? Yes, for a time, but as the older people die off or move away or lose interest, the Church dies. There must be young life, and that is obtainable almost entirely through the Sunday School. We find that 79% of the church organizations report Sunday Schools. But on the other hand, can we have a Sunday School without a Church? Not for long, but the balance dips the other way from what it does in the case of the Church without the Sunday School, for we find that where a Sunday School is started setting in a country school house or similar place there is a great tendency for a young Church to hatch. Again, the Sunday School makes the Church. If then the Sunday School is the incubator of the Church, it surely is of consequence.

Now it would be the natural thing for me to begin here and speak of how the child mind is influenced and trained, and how eventually the child is led to consider itself a part of the Church and of the Kingdom. There is much that could be said on that subject, but as Professor Bowne used to say, most of the potatoes in that particular hill have been dug already, or will be dug by someone else. So I will swing for a few minutes into another field.

Now I believe that it is perfectly obvious that a child in the Sunday School gets nothing more than a general foundation for his faith in the Bible. He knows all of the stories and partially understands some of the teaching. But there is a vast amount that he does not understand. At the age of eighteen or twenty or twenty-two he comes to the end of his Sunday School days. He is urged to continue, but he knows the [redacted] by heart and has other things that interest him more. There is something better for him to be doing, he thinks, than reviewing. So he goes out into the world, perhaps to college. Now in his day school he never learned anything about spiritual things or things pertaining to religion directly. From my experience in colleges I say that he gets nothing of that nature in college if he is an average college student. He may get a course in the life of Christ or something like that, but as to anything that goes to establish his faith, that is all. On the contrary, his premature opinions based on scientific research tend to draw him away from anything so complicated as the system of Christian doctrine. He goes to a professional school with the same results, -an adequate education as far as learning to shoot or write or make a living is concerned, but very inadequate as far as comprehending the facts of salvation as taught in the Bible is concerned. The graded Sunday School is in no small degree a solution of the problem of the Church in the rural community.

UNCLE SAM'S FARM.

It has served well to plant school houses in the rural community that the children may learn. The problem of secular education has been solved largely by the growth in some sections of efficient car systems, circulating libraries, the introduction of athletics, the development of Normal schools, etc. In other places where these things are lacking, there is still a problem, but it is being solved. Agricultural schools have made farming more and more a science. The farmer was formerly a hayseed, a mossback, ridiculed by towns-children and groveling for a living. Now he is a capitalist,- independent, clear-eyed, canny, shrewd, well-read, thoughtful. He knows more of what is going on in the world than most stock brokers know. The mail is delivered to him and he reads half a dozen magazines and as many daily and weekly papers. He knows stock and prices and feed and land and politics and the questions of the day unusually well, and has his opinions. The Grange and the Institute and the Farmer's Convention, etc. know that he is progressive. Has the Church come to a realization of that fact? Have we been able to see that the young men in the rural community are retaining an interest in religious progress? With his growing regard for the practical, is the farmer seeing Christianity as a practical necessity to his own development and to the development of his family? We are prone to remark that the best men of the city are those who were raised on the farms. If that is true, have these "best men" of the city had a sufficient religious tendency given them in their early lives? Is it not true that in more ways than one the farmer is coming to rule the country? Is it then more profitable that we should let a boy grow up uncared for by the country Church, and when he becomes a man in the city set in his ways of thinking, that we should strive with great expenditure of energy to influence him for Christianity and the Church; or to properly reach and edu-

cate the country boy in the country Church and send him into the city with the best and highest ideals to lead the city in the affairs of the Kingdom. It seems to me that it is a matter of economy to get the life of the boy rather than to wait for the life of the man.

The question is, "Does the country Church meet the demands of the hour in interesting, holding, converting, and directing the religious thought of the farmer, of the farmer's son who is to be a farmer, and of the farmer's son who is going to the city? Along with this question comes one very like it, but referring to the man and the boy in the small country town or village; for when you speak of the rural community you must not fail to recognize the fact that the town or village where the farmer buys and sells and to which he eventually retires, and where the people live on the handling of the farmer's produce, is a part of the rural community. Again the question,- "Are we as a Church meeting the demands of the rural community for the things that the rural community has a right to demand of the Church?" Curtly, we answer "No". Then we retract slightly and answer "In part".

Religion is the highest attainment of man. It should be the foundation of philosophy and of science and of living. It should be a live issue in every advance, in every phase of life. It should be behind every proper scheme of education, every new discovery of science in any field, every sociological movement, every economic adjustment. As the embodiment of the highest good, the institution of Christianity, the Church, should take an active part in providing everything that is needful in the community life, from cleanness in politics to purity in amusements. The Church should be the enemy of ignorance, moral laxity, and open sin in every community and should be the agent of education, reform and spiritual growth in every individual life in every home. The Church is on the

ground, but the question is "Is the Church on the job?" No; we are told that that is true in the city. Quite true, but we are now in the country, considering the city problem if you will, but at one of its sources. The problem is still, however, in the country.

There are thousands of farmers and village folk in every state who never attend Church except to go to the Christmas Tree or to the "recitin" or to the funeral of a friend. They have their notions of religion, gotten mostly by themselves from their miscellaneous reading -- self-educated religionists, you might say, with no particular individual use for the Church and, consequently, little or no individual support of it in even the matter of sending their children to the Sunday School or to the Church service. It is a well known fact that in some parts of the country, yea in very many if not practically all, you [redacted] a farmer's child in the road on a Sunday and ask if there is a Sunday School held near there and if he or she ever went and the child does not know to what kind of an institution you may be referring. It is not necessary to go further into proving the existence of a problem -- the problem is here and is as follows:-

1. Why is the church not meeting the moral, ethical and religious needs of the Rural Community?
2. What are the needs to be met?
3. How is the Church to meet them?

The problem is in the country. Let us consider the relation of a farmer to the Church.

In the first place, the farmer is a man, with a human body, mind and spirit. He is an extremely practical man, - he needs to be. But he is a man with his sorrows, woes, temptations, longings, aspirations, soul hunger. His is not a life crammed with hustle and flurry, but with routine work which gives him time for thought and meditation. He is a thinking man and his thoughts are often deep. He is likely to be strong

willed, but is extremely neighborly. With his city brother he craves comradeship, brotherhood, fraternity, and most of all sympathy. He needs someone who knows men to come and know him, and let him tell him his perplexities. However much it may be true that a farmer wants a pastor who knows wheat from rye and sheep from hogs, it is much more true that he wants someone who knows the soil of the human heart, the seed of righteousness and the Word, the cultivation of friendship and the growth of eternal life in the soul. In short, the farmer is human, with passion and strife in his heart, and he needs the touch of the divine.

It is often regretted that the farmer is so indifferent to the Word and to religion,- the fact is that he is indifferent to the distributing agent of the Word and the promoter of religion in a community. It is altogether likely that in many instances the farmer has spent more time in reading and in meditation in the course of a week than has many a puttering preacher, and is more competent to talk on some subjects than is his sermonizing pulpit friend. Indifference to an inferior sample of a bit of ecclesiastical machinery is not necessarily indifference to the eternal things of life. Deep in every man's heart is a desire to know the fact and to be prepared for it. The meditating farmer, be he of great or little mental ability, will solve by aid of his miscellaneous reading, experience and thought, to his own present satisfaction, a great many of the problems connected therewith. But his indifference to the Church is proverbial and is a fact because the Church has not kept step with the farmer. The Evangelist says,

> "A filled-up country cemetery beside an empty or a dying church, is not an unfamiliar sight. If our itinerant evangelism is not equal to the work of applying the gospel to the scattered country homes and maintaining religious services in the country places, we do well to make careful inspection of our machinery, our equipment, our consecration, and our power."

There is no need of a new Gospel -- the old is good

enough - in fact it is the only one we have. A correspondent says that there is need of new forms of presenting the gospel message in a new age. "A gospel that will cure modern moral diseases and dire want and grinding greed and pitiful poverty will, he says, take hold of the present generation as the old forms of doctrine took hold of past ages." Very true. Might we not remark, however, that if we are sent to preach sociology it is to be Christian sociology and not merely the conglomerate mass of scientific remarks prepared for the digestion and assimilation of Jewish mass meetings, where Christianity is overlooked as the founder of social services? If we are to preach philosophy, let it be Christian philosophy calculated to give the meditating follower of the plow a sound basis for his thought. If we are called to preach morality, we are called to "remember Jesus Christ and him crucified",- at once the great example and source of power for the attainment of moral standing before God.

Our friend thinks that too many church members attend service only when they feel like it. They have no settled principle to make all circumstances and feelings bend to the one obligation of sustaining the church of God." Very true. But the farmer goes to the Grange Meeting because the Grange does him good; he goes to the Farmer's Institute because he can profit by what he learns there. The Grange or the Institute is a success according as the promoters make them fit certain needs of the agriculturalists. Might it not be true that the Church will be a success according as the promoter makes it fit the needs of the man who has need in his spiritual life? Do not be mistaken,- the farmer does not want a preacher who can show him how to run his farm nearly so much as he wants a pastor who can confide to him great eternal truths of the Kingdom of God in men's lives. A lecturer in a theological seminary wasted a vast amount of his own time and gray matter in preparing and delivering to his class a lecture a lecture

on the idea that the rural preacher ought to take an agricultural college course, take up a farm and run it as a sample for his parishioners, and preach to them Sunday on some phase of agricultural life, illustrating from the Bible. He wasted the time of the students, reversed his climax, and missed the point. The job of the pastor is to cultivate the acquaintanceship and friendship of men and to direct the growth of their religious conception, and the pastor who has not realized this has not struck his pace. The farmer goes to church when he feels like it. He feels like it when he knows he will get something worth while by going and he will feel like it if he has found the preacher to be a pastor, a man like himself, but a veritable storehouse of spiritual brotherliness and helpfulness. "Many pastors fail in downright sincerity in delivering truth and doctrine as the messengers of God. Having no power of prophecy, no triumphant message, they scatter their energies in preaching against minor evils, and thus fail to dig deep at the foundations of inherent depravity."

A pastor must be a worker. He has no right to think that his work is confined to making two speeches on Sunday. If he is forced to drive on a circuit and preach three times, what of that? He is not over worked -- The mail man drives a more wearisome route three hundred days out of the year, works longer hours, and asks less pity. Let us pity the pity-seeking pastor who is overworked on Sunday., but pity him for his smallness. Possibly, probably, he is a putterer the rest of the week. A district superintendent testifies to the effect that the greatest source of the problem of the rural church is the puttering mouthpiece of the Lord. Men go to a small place, think it unworthy of their great efforts, reckon that the folks won't understand their deep thoughts, and so spend their time in "reading up" for the time when they will be great preachers. They say that they can't be expected to be both pastors and

preachers, but Quayle says that the man who can't do two things well is miserably deficient. A putterer is not a lazy man, - oh no, he is busy from morning till night. But he is a do-nothing. A lawyer goes to the office in the morning and comes home at night, and his wife does the housework. A puttering preacher helps his wife with the breakfast dishes, sweeps the floor, dresses the children and gets ready for dinner. In the meantime he has planned his work for tomorrow or next week. But his plans go to blue print and are used over again the next day, - to look at while he spends the morning sifting the ashes and feeding the horse. The afternoon is a busy time, but the putterer, tired out, goes to bed with "nothing accomplished, nothing done, to earn a night's repose". More churches fail on account of the aimlessness of the pastor's living than for any other reason.

The pastor complains that the laymen do not do enough for the Church. The fact is that the layman often works more hours day after day and accomplishes more in a week's time than does the pastor, and when his daily task is done is worthy of praise if he gives some of his well earned hours of recreation to the service of the Church. The fact is that he pays the pastor to do a great many things which the pastor tries to unload upon the layman.

At this point it may be objected that the burden of responsibility for the inefficiency of the church is being put upon the preacher. Well, that is where it belongs. Paul did his work himself and pulled laymen into it by the force of his earnestness. Savanarola burned himself out and in the burning brought other men to a white heat. Luther and Wesley and Whitefield and Moody were men of tireless efficiency, asking nothing more in the way of effort than they were willing to do themselves. They felt themselves to be set apart to lead others in a life of service. The preacher - pastor in a community must be the most tirelessly aggressive warrior of the

Kingdom. He has no right to shift his burden to the shoulders of others and to say, "my laymen are asleep". If he is not enough a clarion call of the Lord to wake the laymen up, he is deficient. Many a Church is not valued at par because the Head is dependent, defective and delinquent.

Many pastors are dependent. - too dependent. They court favors, accept patronage and allow themselves to be treated as under-ordinary men, flattering themselves that a 10% rebate is a mark of courtesy. So it is, but it marks the courtesy of the giver more than it signifies any definite deep seated respect for the recipient.

Mollycoddles cannot be leaders. They are defective,- many of them. Their education has been neglected or overlooked. They are shallow ditches full of stale water when they should be deep wells of spiritual water. They should be able to give a cup of refreshment to a weary traveller or to cool the hot blood of youth or to relieve the fever of the brainy man. Many a church has no reason to be proud of the manhood, fervor, or knowledge of their pastor. As one whom we loved in our alma mater has said, "Such a man ought to be arrested for indecent exposure of his mental person", and also of his spiritual paucity.

But delinquency, - that is the greatest problem. An old friend said to me at one time "Preachers are counted as a lazy class, and often rightly. The reason for the failure of many a young man in the ministry is that he is afraid of work. Of all things, do something every day, and move while you do it". Good advice. In a period of several years of roaming overthe country meeting pastors, visiting churches, greeting laymen, I have observed the truthfulness of the statement. Making a wealth of admissions in response to numerous objections, the fact still stands in glittering challenge to us, that to the man who is a worker and not a shirker; earnest without being

crankified; soulful but not mournful; sympathetic but not inquisitive; knowing but in no wise puffed up; busy without waste of energy; wise but not in his own conceits; brotherly, not sisterly; a prophet of God, a servant of Jesus Christ, a vessel of the Holy Ghost, a brother of men and lover of children; a respector of old age; whether in the country or in the country town or village, or for that matter, in the city; for men are pretty much alike and "folks is folks" wherever you find them; such a man will make his church "go", will meet and solve his problem, will direct the life tendency of the young people, and will build up the Kingdom in his community.

In many communities we find that a great objection to the work of the Church is extra denominationalism -- too many churches for the number of people; too much contention and competition between denominations. Competition is the life of trade and is also a strong factor in developing church life in a community, but there is such a thing as having so many churches to keep up, so many pastors to support, that no one church is able to do a sufficient work. An example of this may be cited from personal experience in a community in Michigan. In a country village of three hundred inhabitants, with an outlying territory fairly well settled, there is a United Brethren Church, a Methodist Episcopal Church, a Wesleyan Methodist Church, a Church of the Disciples of Christ and the Baptist Church. These are all struggling for an existence. No one of them can afford a competent, well-equipped, hustling pastor. The result is that the work of the Lord in that community is dependent upon the inefficiency of five preachers, who are not up to par value in personality or equipment. No one of these churches claims the respect of the community to any great degree, and to no one of them can the community point with pride for the good that it is accomplishing, or even from an architectural view point. There is strife between the church members; there is bitterness among the pastors; there is lack of harmony in the whole community;

there is no concerted action for the public welfare. There are five salaries of $400.00 each which, if paid to two $1,000 men, would make it possible to run effectively two churches in the community, giving the people chance for choice, giving them efficiency, giving them something to pay for the money and time expended in vastly more degree than is now the case.

In many a country church there is no attraction. The people go to hear the preacher out of loyalty to an institution in which they believe, and possibly because of friendship for the preacher himself. But the young people want something attractive. We have our attractive features in the city. Why not have them in the country? The former is able to pay and willing to pay for what he gets, if what he gets is worth paying for. It has been suggested that one service a Sunday is enough to ask a farmer to drive miles in order to attend. More than [redacted] service, if well conducted, if made attractive, will bring more farmers in, will receive greater support, than will two if neither one of the two is made attractive. Sunday is a preacher's busy day. He ought to be willing to be busy -- real busy, on this one day. He ought to be able to school himself to speak at least three times effectively. It has been suggested that we return to the old circuit system. It is also suggested that the country preacher with his worn out horse and his old carriage should be replaced by a man with a modern conveyance, of which he need not be ashamed, a yea of which he can be proud.

Now, this all leads up to the proposition that if the farmer could be sure of first-class music and of first-class pastoral work, he would be willing to pay for it what it was worth. The farmer is shrewd enough to want to be shown that it is worth while, but if he is persuaded that he needs a thing, that his family needs it, he will have it.

Suppose now that the pastor secures the services of

a soloist or even of a quartet, as does the pastor of a city church, and pays them for their services; suppose that they agree to sing at every service on Sunday where he is to preach regularly; suppose that he prepares the best sermon that his thought is able to produce with the aid of his reading in the course of a week; suppose that on a Sunday morning he starts out with his soloist or quartet in a vehicle that will carry him to four places of preaching through the scattered country community, and in each community he and his choir render, with the aid of the people, as good a service as the people would get in the city. Will the farmer get to such a service? Will he respond to the pastoral visitation and the pastoral brotherly kindness and interest? Will he understand that these things are to be paid for by him as a member of the aggregate Sunday congregation, and will the pastor find that he can support his work financially? Let us suppose that he covers 30 square miles; suppose that there are 5,000 inhabitants, farmers and townspeople, he will probably, out of 5,000 people, get an aggregate audience during the day of 500, which is one tenth of his population. Suppose, on the other hand, that he is the pastor in a town or small city of 5,000 inhabitants. He does well if he has 500 people or one tenth of his population. The cost of his operations is not materially more than the cost of the city operations with the same population. He has reached 500 people who are more able to divide the expense between them than the 200 or 400 we get in the city. He has done a more efficient work.

There is another question that demands consideration. We have remarked that a pastor has no right to be lazy, to be puttering. He has no right to be self-centered. He has a right to expect, if he does his work, an adequate remuneration. In most cases where a man makes himself felt in a community -- where he makes himself really felt and where he is appreciated because he makes himself appreciated, where folks understand

that he is busy and that he is accomplishing something -- he will have no difficulty in making a living. But the fact remains that in a great many cases an advance in the salary of the preacher would be a good thing. In fact, it is imperative. At the last session of the Philadelphia Conference the discovery was made that while millions were being given to every sort of work outside of the community church life, the average salary of men below a certain grade was something like $240.00 a year. This is only one instance. I quote from a correspondent of one of our church papers:-

> "The preachers of the United States ought to be better paid. Their salaries on the average, except in the 125 largest cities, is $573, while the living expenses of the average family, taking the country over, is said to be $689.
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> How are ministers to obtain the difference betwixt these average receipts in their profession and the average cost in all vocations?
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> During the last week of December 100,000 engineers and trainmen were granted an increase of ten per cent in their salaries, which averaged $1,000 a year. The increase will amount to nearly $10,000,000 annually.
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> An increase of $10,000,000 a year would make the average salary of the 100,000 Protestant ministers of America $673 per year, and would cost the 23,000,000 church members about fifty cents a year more than they are paying. As one-half of the church membership is not paying anything, it would require $1 per year more from paying members.
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> Would this be a hardship so great that to advance to it would be impracticable? We think not.
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> Many preachers do not receive even four hundred dollars a year each in salaries, and they are expected not only to educate their children, but to buy books, entertain guests, and bear other extras in living expenses. How can they do it?
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> Moreover, the average preacher should be paid more promptly. It is certainly an unnecessary hardship for pastors to be kept waiting for the small salaries they have already earned. How can a man preach well under such conditions, especially when unpaid grocery bills and other current accounts are staring him in the face, and perhaps being flung at him with a taunt?
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> It is neither business nor religion nor civility for a church to treat its pastor in such a neglectful way. The world observes such radical shortcomings, and is frequently moved to protest against them."

In a recent issue the New York Commercial observed:-

> "There is no earthly reason - or a heavenly one, for that matter - why a church organization, if it is solvent, should not pay its pastor's salary and all its other bills with reasonable promptness, just as business organizations do and are, in fact, practically compelled to do; if it is solvent, it should 'get out of business'. An insolvent parish or one always struggling and always on the brink of collapse has the right, of course, to continue that sort of thing; but it cannot do really good church work because it is constantly holding up to its members a vicious example of delinquency and of disregarding obligations. And every time a clergyman quits the ministry because he can't make a living in it -- and instances of this are not rare -- the fact seriously discredits the church."

In conclusion, we remember that Charles Jefferson ~~of the~~ before New York Conference recently tried to answer the question, - "What is a preacher?", and at each stage of the game of definition he stopped and said to his congregation "Now, do you know ~~what a preacher is~~". When he had finished, he had given no definition; he had simply outlined a system of thought by which he had led his hearers to see that a preacher is a preacher and that is the end of it.

We trust that we have faced the problem; that we have talked about it; that we have made some points and that we have given some information. But we have not solved the problem. We have hinted at its solution, but the solution remains with the pastor. Let us repeat: "It remains with the pastor". To be sure it remains with the laymen, but first with the pastor, and he must lay it upon the hearts of the laymen. Each pastor in his own community must solve his own problem. The time was when the farmer planted all of his corn with a hoe, and planted all of his potatoes with a hoe, and he dug his potatoes with a hoe, and he cultivated his corn with a hoe. The time has come when the farmer has a hoe, but he scarcely uses it. He plants his corn with a corn planter, and his potatoes with a potato planter, and he digs his potatoes with a potato digger, and he

cultivates his corn with a cultivator. He covers more ground; he gets better crops; he saves more labor; he makes more money. When the farmer sees a new machine, if the machine will do old work in a new way more quickly, more efficiently, and with a saving to himself, he buys the new machine.

The pastor in a community must learn to hang up the old hoe, using it only when occasion demands, and he must get out all of the new and more efficient machinery. He must know what machinery will best work in his community. He must understand the people. He must live with the people; he must be one of the people. Above all, he cannot expect to solve his problem by rule. In the course of a few years of experience in different states, we have visited many churches and in no two churches have we found the same problem, or the same people, or the same kind of a pastor. The pastor who has made a success has made a success by being himself, by giving himself, by cultivating the people.

Last of all, which we would not leave out, to which we might give a great space, but which coming at the end after the flurry of theory and words and climaxes and long sentences has subsided, will mean the more because of its simplicity. No problem in any church, among any people, under any pastor, can be solved otherwise than by earnest, believing, continued steadfast prayer.

Entered

may 11/07