

THE UNION SEMINARY REVIEW

VOL. XXVI.

JANUARY, 1915.

No. 2.

THE TEACHER'S ELEVEN HELPERS.*

BY REV. A. F. SCHAUFFLER, D. D.,

*Chairman of the International Sunday School Lesson Committee, 1908-1914,
New York City.*

EIGHTH LECTURE.

This morning our theme is: "The Teacher's Eleven Helpers." Every Sunday-school superintendent who is capable will sooner or later have a good school. However disorganized the school may be when he takes it, he will work cosmos out of chaos in due time. Every capable teacher, whatever may be the class passed over to him or her, will sooner or later have a well-managed class because the teacher can by patience, perseverance and prayer largely overcome the difficulties that any class presents. If the teacher is fortunate enough to have a good superintendent, then teacher and superintendent work in close co-operation, and school-work and class-work rapidly attain a fine development.

I am talking this morning, however, about that particular teacher who, even independently of the superintendent, can make admirable use of the eleven helpers that God has given.

Every teacher has *two eyes*. I have seen teachers who you would think were blind, because they did not seem to see. Every superintendent who notices finds teachers who are oblivious to disorder in the class. The boys may be cutting up didos but the teacher keeps on the even tenor of her way and

*This article is one of ten lectures on "The Book and the Boy," which Dr. Schauffler delivered at Union Theological Seminary during October, 1914, on the Sprunt Foundation. The lecture was taken down by a stenographer, and we give it as it was delivered. See editorial comment.

THE COUNTRY PASTOR.

BY REV. E. D. BROWN,

Pastor Concord Church, Lora, N. C.

At the outset let me enter a protest against the use of the phrase, "The problem of the country church." There are problems to be solved in the country church, of course, just as there are problems in the city church. But let us not set the country church off to itself and call it a problem. I was reared in the country, and am now a country pastor, but my ministry so far has been almost equally divided between the town and country pastorate, and I am unable to see that the one is any more of a problem than the other.

It is a sad fact that many of our country churches are dying, but there is also this hopeful fact, that the church as a whole, is becoming aroused, and is beginning to see the necessity of reviving them and keeping them alive, if our city and town churches are to live. Is it not possible to keep these dying churches alive? Why not? Is not the "gospel of Christ the power of God unto salvation" in the country just as it is in the town? Surely the Holy Spirit is just as ready to make his word effectual in the one as in the other. The trouble is in getting efficient men to go to the country and proclaim this all-powerful gospel. This, in my judgment, is the real "problem"—if there be any.

After about ten years' experience as a member of the Home Mission Committee in two Presbyteries, I can testify that the great difficulty in keeping up our country churches is the difficulty in securing suitable men. Give us the right sort of men, and, in my opinion, there will be no more problem about the country church than about the city church. But what kind of man do we need for the country church? At the risk of being misunderstood, let me mention a few qualifications that are specially needed.

First of all *he should be a man who can preach.* Dr. Alexander

was not far wrong when he said to his students, "Young men, when you go to the city, take your best coat; but when you go to the country, take your best sermon." Country people are not so particular about the style of the preacher's clothes, but they are very particular about the character of the sermon. Furthermore, they can recognize the gospel when they hear it. If you want to find sermon-tasters, go to an old country church. There is a reason for this. There are fewer attractions and distractions in the country, and the people have more time to think, and when they go to church, they expect to hear something that will make them think. They expect to be fed. They believe that a preacher's first business is to preach. Some seem to think that almost any kind of preacher will do for a country church. It is a great mistake. The country church is the last place to send a poor preacher.

Secondly, *he should be a man of patience and tact*, a man with plenty of good, common sense and with an abundant store of patience. Country people, and especially those in our old communities, move slowly. The pastor must expect to wait, and sometimes a long time, for results; and particularly so, if it is anything in the way of a change in their old ways of doing things. They are not ready to accept without question, every new thing (to their credit be it said), even though it be suggested by a minister of the gospel. The preacher must therefore be patient, and if he has the confidence of his people, and can convince them that the change suggested is right, he will find that after a while, they will come to his side and stand by him loyally. The restless, impatient man who thinks he is going to upset the ways and customs of an old country congregation in a few months, is doomed to disappointment. He will probably be about as successful as the man Mr. Kipling tells us about, who "tried to hustle the East."

Thirdly, *he should be a leader and organizer*.

In the books and articles I have read on the country church, special emphasis is laid on the importance of organizing "community clubs," and such like. Perhaps there should be something of the kind in every community, and if so, the preacher should encourage it. But let him not forget that the church

has a far higher work to do than to provide entertainment for the community. The country preacher must remember that he is to be the organizer and leader of his people for Christian work. In most country churches there is a great lack of leaders. Yet there are some in every community who can be trained. Just here many of us fail. Some of us don't know how to organize people. Some of us haven't that gift or talent, and some of us doubtless are lazy. It is so much easier for the preacher to go ahead and do things himself than to train some inexperienced person. It must be evident to all who are acquainted with the facts that one of the crying needs of our country churches is leaders. Here then, is a golden opportunity for the organizer and leader to exercise all his gifts in this direction. The country church, as a rule, is very much in need of wise training in the matter of systematic giving. The pastor should therefore be one who can lead in this as well as in other church work. Here, as elsewhere, he must use tact and common sense. He should be "as wise as a serpent and harmless as a dove."

One other thing—not exactly a qualification—should be mentioned here, viz.: *The country preacher should by all means live in the country.* He must identify himself with his people. So long as he and his family live in town, it will be impossible for his congregation to consider him as one with them. I am persuaded that some country churches have been killed by this very thing.

No doubt some will say that the qualifications I have mentioned are needed in the city pastor too. So they are, but they are peculiarly needed in one who will render most efficient service in the country church.

According to the newspaper reports, one of the speakers at Montreat last summer said: "Happy is the man who has a country pastorate." And he was right. But why is it so difficult to secure competent men for our country churches? There are various reasons perhaps, some of which are herewith set down. At the head of the list we should place *the inadequate support.* The salary of the country minister in our church ranges from about \$600 to \$1,200, with the average nearer the first figure than the last. Now anyone who is at all acquainted with the cost of living, knows that this means living the simple

life to say the least of it. It means hardship if a man's children are to be educated.

It is not a sufficient answer to the above to say, "O, but the cost of living is so much less in the country!" Having tried both town and country, I can testify that the difference largely consists in learning to practice "the gentle art of doing without things."

Another reason, perhaps, that keeps men away from the country church, is *the discouraging character of the work*. Many are moving to the towns, and in some cases a large portion of the original population is gone.

The country pastor may feel pretty sure that the best of his young people will leave him. It is possible and indeed probable, that after years of faithful work, his total membership will not be as great as when he began. But has he, for that reason, been a failure? Nay, verily! Ask the city churches where his young people have gone.

A few years ago an officer in one of our large city churches told me that everyone of its officers (and there were more than thirty) had been reared in a country church. Was it not a glorious work to reach with the gospel and train those men who were to have a large share in the world's work and be the leaders in a great city church? Surely it was.

One other reason should be mentioned, viz.: The idea some have that a man accepts a country charge simply because he can't get any other. In some cases this is true, but many times it is not, and it should not be true in any case. To state the reason in other words: if a man is ambitious for prominence in the church, he had better stay away from the country. I have hesitated to mention this, lest I be misunderstood. Let me say most emphatically that I have no axe to grind in this respect. I have been made as prominent as I wanted to be in church courts, and elsewhere, and sometimes more so. Nevertheless the idea prevails with some of my country brethren that we are in some measure "looked down upon" because we are country preachers. In my judgment, they are generally mistaken, and yet I am sure that there is some reason in their complaint. They say, for example, that it is very seldom indeed, that a

country parson is put forward by "the powers that be" in synods, conferences, etc. That when a city pastor wishes assistance in special services he almost never calls on a country preacher; that when a city church is looking for a pastor or for a supply during their pastor's vacation, the country parson is overlooked entirely, etc.

These, no doubt, are some of the things that make it hard to secure efficient men for the country church. But suppose there are hardships? Is it not worth while? There are compensations too. The country church is largely free from many things that help to break the city pastor's heart. The country parson may not handle much money, and he may have to deny himself many things, but if he is faithful he may be sure of the love and esteem of his people, and when he stands before them to proclaim God's message he may be sure that they are really going to think about what he says. He may not be made prominent in public places and his work may appear to be a failure so far as visible results in that particular church are concerned, but is it not worth while to reach with the gospel and train those who are to make the existence and growth of the great city churches possible?

Young men of the seminary, if you are seeking a place where your life will count for much in the world's work, a place where there is abundant opportunity to exercise all your gifts; if you would work in "the Lord's seed patch," then ask the Lord to prepare you and send you to a country pastorate.