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CHARLES H. GOULD, Manager,
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AN APPEAL TO THE CLERGY

American Highway Association Calls for
the Co-operation of the Church

To Knit the Country Together With
Bonds of Both Good Roads and
Good Fellowship



AS Mr. James Bryce says in "The American Commonwealth," "the school is becoming the nucleus of local self-government in the South now, as the church was in New England two centuries ago," and both ought to be actively identified with the good roads movement, without success of which neither can attain that degree of prosperity essential to the welfare of the whole community. The direct and immediate effect of improved highways upon the educational institutions in the country districts has been discussed in these chronicles. The building of modern school houses, the extension of the courses of study, the employment of community wagons for the transportation of pupils from wide districts to and from the school centers to their respective homes, the advantage of converting the school buildings between terms or on days when "school is out" into community forums for the discussion of public questions of large moment or for such variety of public entertainment as the people might desire, are all subjects that have been treated by many wise and thoughtful leaders. In the consideration of the good roads problem strange to say, however, one of the most influential bodies of workers has been passed over with little attention. The country doctors, whose labors are abundant and poorly rewarded, have been invited to take an active part in the good road movement for their own benefit and the benefit of the patients who depend upon their ministrations for relief in their times of distress, and equally with these Samaritans are the country preachers whose mission it is to administer to the soul while the physicians are doing their best for the body.

In 1914 there were 178,313 ministers, including the clergy of all the churches or denominations or sects in the United States who were ministering to 225,486 churches representing a membership of 28,805,559. The larger number of these ministers were engaged in the work of country parishes or congregations. They are all deeply concerned not only for the spiritual welfare of their flocks but for their material comfort as well. In the pursuit of their abundant labors they have found how difficult, how at times almost impossible, it is for them to do their work because of the impassable condition of the roads over which they must journey on their missions of mercy. The most of them are ill paid, many of them actually live from hand to mouth; the average salary of the country minister

probably does not amount to over \$400 the year, and how they live only the Lord knows. Take the Episcopal Church, for example, which is said to contain "the richest church membership in the United States," and there are 4,420 men employed in its active service. The average salary of its ministers is \$1,300 the year, all of which, however, is not paid in cash. More than 2,500 of its clergy receive less than \$1,500, and only 237, including bishops, receive \$4,000. Over 700 are paid less than \$1,000. The *Southern Churchman* says "they are expected to have a good education, to dress well, to live and move among people where rents are high, keep open house, always appear cheerful and preserve their physical vigor." In the main they do all this, and as one of the Washington rectors said recently, "the preachers are the true economists of the age and do more for less money than any other workers in the land." The American Highway Association, unfortunately, cannot "raise their wages," so to say, but it can tell them, not only the Episcopal brethren but all who work in the same field, how, by the exercise of their admittedly great influence they can help particularly to improve the condition of the preachers employed in the rural districts.

Preaching one or two sermons on Sunday, however important, is not by any means all that the country parson is expected and required to do—his parlor work is as important as his preaching service. His parish generally covers a great stretch of country and his congregation is widely scattered. He must keep in close touch with them if he is to exercise the duties of the ministry with which he has been charged. In the older and really better time in New England and throughout the country, the country parson was the guide, counselor and friend of all his people. Being the most learned man in the community, he was consulted by his parishioners on all questions of public and domestic concern and wielded a tremendous influence in society and upon the body-politic. He was the oracle of his parish, kept fully advised upon public questions and their relation to the public morals, and where he led the people followed. In spite of the general dissemination of knowledge and the disposition of the crowd to do as it pleases, he still is, or ought to be, the most influential man in his neighborhood—and he would be if he would only in his secular moments manifest an active interest in the practical affairs of his parish.

One of the most practical affairs with which the people have to deal is the building of good roads, roads which would tie the country and the town together, which would make neighbors of those who dwell miles apart, which would afford the means of easy communication between the country doctor and his patients and between the country parson and the members of his church. The country parson finds it possible only at the expense of great nervous energy and physical exhaustion at certain times of the year to keep in touch with the members of his flock. He knows by hard experience the difficulty of riding or walking over muddy roads and through oceans of slush to those longing for his comforting presence in time of sickness

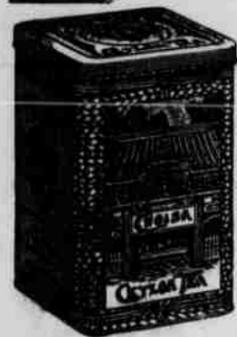
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