has been made for curtaining spaces that may be used for bedrooms. This part of
the house is lighted by a cluster of three small windows set in a dormer and a larger
window at each side of the house. All the
windows are casement, opening out, set
with small panes.

It is not possible to reproduce the floor
plans of the house, as Mr. Smith drew up
only rough sketches which were often changed and destroyed immediately upon
being used. For this reason he feels that
the house grew rather than was built.

When the plastering was to be done it
was impossible to find an experienced plas-
terer to do the work, so Mr. Smith had to
instruct the workman hired in the use of
his tools. Later on when even this help
failed him both he and his mother plastered
part of the walls themselves. So much of
the work was done at odd times and by
varying kinds of labor that the exact cost
of the construction was not obtainable, but
it was most moderate for the charm and
comfort that have been captured for this
summertime home among the hills.

THE COUNTRY CHURCH: BY
FRANCES BOWMAN

The average country church is pro-
ducing little that is likely to ap-
pear to people who have not al-
ready formed the church-going
habit. New members are not coming;
young people are not held; attendance is
falling off, and the church is not meeting
the needs of the community.

The church has failed to do what its
members have done in other departments of
life. The farmer has discarded his old-
fashioned tools for modern labor-saving
implements; the housekeeper has her vacu-
um-cleaner, bread-mixer and modern ways
of doing work; the country merchant de-
pends largely on his advertising to help his
sales, and is fast imitating the city mer-
chant in disposing of his stock in trade.
Yet the country church which was formed
eighty or a hundred years ago is doing
business on the same old plan. The church
program is identical with that of past years
with a possible young people’s society,
which is usually an exact copy of the old
folks’ prayer-meeting.

A young theological student, a man of
vision, came as a candidate into our little
country church one summer Sunday. As
he looked over the order of service he de-
cided to change the anthem. Consequently
he requested the choir to sing it for the sec-
ond number and to sing a familiar hymn
just before the sermon. Of course he
didn’t realize that it was an unwritten law
handed down from past choir generations
in our church that the anthem should be
sung directly after the collection had been
taken and just before the sermon. Neither
did he realize the fearful consequences
which were sure to come to one who tried
to dictate to the choir. He preached a
splendid sermon. It was free from dogma
and creed, and emphasized right living and
the power of the love of Christ to trans-
form the life. The keynote of his message
was love and service.

At the conclusion of a business meeting
held after the evening service, a deacon, a
man of stern Calvinistic views, domineer-
ing and narrow, informed the minister that
the church had voted against him. He
said: “The choir won’t stand for any
change in their program, and we don’t want
to hear so much about love. We want the
terrors of the law.”

It’s the “terrors of the law” that is clos-
ing many a small church’s door. It is driv-
ing people into lodges and social organiza-
tions in the smaller places. It is compelling
the thinking people to stay away from
church service. For the country church
congregation is made up largely of two ex-
tremes: A few refined, thoughtful, pro-
gressive people, and that larger class who
are ignorant, dogmatic, intolerant, and who
are fearful that every new idea and method
is a direct blow to destroy the church.

Now it is a serious thing in a small com-
munity to offend the church. Consequenti-
ly when a man in his own mind comes to
think that he is not sure endless punish-
ment awaits the sinner; that he is not sure
that Christ Jesus and God the Father Al-
mighty are one, and that he does not be-
lieve in total depravity or the fall of man,
he would better keep his thoughts to him-
self. There is a choice of two ways be-
fore him: He can keep on attending church
service where he will be urged to believe
many things which he does not consider
necessary to the Christian life; or, he can
leave the church and become forever brand-
ed as an unbeliever, an atheist, and an in-
fidel.

That is one of the problems, perhaps the
most serious in the country church. How
THE COUNTRY CHURCH

can it be solved? How can the church meet the demands of these two extremes? Isn’t it possible for the country church to emphasize Christian living and good deeds more than catechisms and creeds, so that the man of honest doubt could worship with the church? And isn’t there more than one route toward the great end that we are all striving to reach? And couldn’t the right kind of a country minister lead, or persuade, or teach his people to be tolerant of other people’s views?

The success of a country church is largely dependent on the minister. How unfortunate, then, that so many country pulpits are occupied by men of narrow religious opinions, men who are afraid of new ideas, modern thought, and up-to-date methods, a product of the sixteenth century thought preaching to a twentieth century audience. A half century ago the minister was looked up to as the intellectual leader of the community. Now with our Rural Delivery mail, bringing us daily communication with the world, our free institutions of learning, and easy access to large cities, many of our country people are as well educated and informed as the clergy. The minister should realize this and make his church attractive by its modern-day spirit. Yet the typical country minister clings persistently to the ancient truth held so sacredly as “the word.” The truth is still the same, but it needs to be presented in a modern garb in order to make it helpful to our present-day needs. In our church on “Child Labor Day Sunday” we had an old-fashioned doctrinal sermon on the “Fall of Man.” At another time the subject which had been announced as particularly helpful to young people was “The Beauty of Holiness.” The people were anxious for bread; they received a stone. It is often thus in country pulpits.

The country church ought to be the dynamic life-giving force of the community, efficient in her achievements, lofty in her ideals of service, and willing to give up many of her narrow old-time ways in order to become a fearless leader in the broad possibilities presented by the problems of the day.

In our large towns and cities, sectarian barriers are falling off, and the spirit of religious toleration and union of denominations is growing. This movement to bring about the whole-souled Christian union of the smaller churches into one large institutional church with an able minister and a working congregation, willing and eager to put new methods and ideas in the place of old ones and prove their worth—this is what the country church needs. Yet it may not always be advisable to give up a denomination.

In Whiting, Iowa, a town of only seven hundred people, a new institutional church building was recently dedicated. It cost thirty-five thousand dollars and is the only one of its kind in the State. Under its roof are four institutions, a library, clubrooms, gymnasium, and sanctuary. It is under the direction of the Congregational church, yet it has the support of the community. Such an institution in a small town where there are two other strong churches is worth the careful attention of all who are interested in the country church problem.

In one country church the minister planned a unique lecture course. He prevailed on the village doctor, an old man who had always lived in the community, to lecture on the “Right of the Child to Health.” He asked the village lawyer to lecture on “Civic Rights.” A successful farmer gave a practical talk on “Farming,” and the closing lecture was called “Father’s and Mother’s Night,” and every father and mother was urged to meet the church had helped them and how it could be made more helpful. The people came in to these lectures. They knew they would hear something practical. Light refreshments were served and usually there was something attractive in the line of good music each evening. Everybody enjoyed the social hour. It helped the minister to draw large crowds to his Sunday services and many people eventually united with the church.

The country church should train its boys and girls to love rural life. Give them a knowledge of birds and animals and grasses and flowers and the history of their own locality. The boys in the Sunday school need a gymnasium and a playground. They need the help of a Boy Scout organization. The girls need the society of Camp-Fire Girls, with its wholesome motto, “Work, health, and love.” They both need a club-room where they can meet to play games, have music, read good magazines and talk over their life plans with the minister or some competent representative. The happiness and moral education of the children and youth rests largely with the church. Will she rise to her great opportunity?
AGRICULTURE IN PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS

In every country community there are good farms and homes, and progressive, cultured people; yet they lack library facilities, clubrooms and an opportunity for clean wholesome recreation. Can the church supply these conditions? It is a modern problem and should be solved in the spirit of love and toleration.

The Knights of the Round Table told the story of a dwarf who used to go about the Court of King Arthur, carrying a drawn sword and imploring the Knights to cut off his head. He seemed a helpless creature and not much attention was paid to his crazed desire. At last he came to the noble Sir Gawain and said, “Gawain, do you love me?” “Why, yes,” replied the knight, “you know I love you. Tell me how I can show my love.” “Take this sword and with it cut off my head,” was the answer. Sir Gawain shrank from the deed, but the dwarf was so persistent that he finally consented, and with a blow cleft the head clear off the body. And lo! as soon as the earth was touched out of the little deformed dwarf sprang a graceful, strong knight who went forth to do noble service for God and the world.

In a small degree the country church finds its counterpart in this legend. In its narrow limitations it holds the promise of the greatest usefulness, a germ of life from God that no killing can destroy. And when Sir Gawain’s sword in the form of modern practical Christianity has stricken it down, lo! there will rise a beautiful church whose mission it will be to instruct its people, improve their conditions, and bless and heal and save a sin-sick world in the name of its great leader, Christ.

AGRICULTURE IN PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS

A REMARKABLY interesting pamphlet has just reached us from Washington, containing the reprint of an article on the above subject by Dick J. Crosby, specialist in agricultural education at the Government office of experiment stations. Mr. Crosby starts with the amazing statement that more than two thousand public high schools in the United States are now teaching agriculture; whereas sixteen years ago there was not one. There are also several hundred State and private colleges, public and private agricultural schools and private high schools in which instruction in this subject is given. This growth of facilities for teaching agriculture, it appears, has been most rapid in the last two years.

“The instruction in agriculture in public high schools,” says Mr. Crosby, “is becoming almost as varied in character as that in the agricultural colleges. It now includes the work of the classroom, the laboratory and shop, the field and garden, and the community in which the high school is located.

“The length of time devoted to agriculture varies from one semester to four years, but the tendency is undoubtedly toward a four-year course, particularly in high schools receiving State aid for agriculture.

“In the four year agricultural course it frequently happens that the first year is devoted to a general course in agriculture, the pupils using one of the elementary textbooks, of which there are now a dozen or more adapted to the different geographical regions of the country. When this plan is followed the other three years are usually devoted to the principal divisions of agriculture, with the use of textbooks on special phases of the subject, supplemented by lectures, bulletins and reference books.”

The importance of laboratory and field work seems to be recognized, for, according to Mr. Crosby, nearly all schools are providing as liberally for apparatus and equipment as their financial means will permit. “In the well equipped high school in which agriculture, home economics and farm mechanics are taught,” he states, “it is the usual thing to find about three laboratories, one devoted to agriculture, another to home economics and a third to shop work. In the agricultural laboratory it is not unusual to find some equipment for work in soils and crops, some for dairy work and possibly a little for work in horticulture.”

Regarding the instruction in agronomy, the specialist states: “The apparatus for soil work usually includes soil tubes, balances, thermometers and considerable chemical glassware, besides microscopes, which are also used for work in farm crops. In addition there are frequently collections of soils, seeds and farm crops, appliances for testing seeds, and some provision for water and gas on the laboratory tables.

“The laboratory work in soils and crops