

character and life of the church therefore depends on the condition of these smaller congregations, rather than on the larger. And the strength and influence of the Presbyterian church have arisen in a great measure from the fact, that in these small rural congregations even in the remotest corners of the land, men of ability and education have been content to labour, and to spend their lives. And it is from these congregations that a stream of members has been constantly flowing forth and filling the ranks of the Churches in the towns and cities of the land.

The continuing to labour for many years, perhaps a lifetime, in such narrow fields, required men of strong faith, and of heroic spirit.

Because the minister in such a field has special difficulties and discouragements which his brother in the city congregation knows nothing of. There is in the first place, the small remuneration which he receives for his work. Small, that is to say, in comparison with what he might have secured had he devoted his talents to some other calling. Small in view of the requirements of his family, and sometimes small in comparison with the means of many of those to whom he was preaching the gospel. His circumstances did not always improve with the increased wealth of his people. Not infrequently of all in the community, he alone had to live on upon the same amount of stipend as he had been paid in the early days of people's poverty. A much better state of things exists now throughout the smaller congregations in the church. The people are now abundantly able to sustain the gospel with liberality, and are becoming more alive to their obligations. They are also coming to know, that to maintain a poorly paid ministry, is to bring an inferior class of men into the pulpit, and to have the work done in a very imperfect manner.