

But this is not the greatest of difficulties with which a pastor has to contend in a small rural charge.

There is in such a field very little to encourage or stimulate the minister in his work. There is little opportunity of intercourse with kindred minds, wherein is so great a help to one engaged in the work of the ministry. And in our church such ministers are left by the church very much to themselves. We boast of our system as developing a spirit of mutual dependence and help between the congregations of a district, but practically no such thing obtains. We are in this respect practically Congregationalists. If Congregationalists prefer to live apart and alone, each church by itself, they would have the widest and freest opportunity of doing this in the Presbyterian church.

The country minister has to bear his trials alone, and the little controversies and quarrels which are inevitable in such a community, are often very injurious to the prosperity and progress of the cause of religion. To continue to preach the gospel with faithfulness, and in a hopeful spirit for a period of half a century with very small remuneration, and often very little to encourage one, sometimes in the face of cruel ingratitude, and of a congregation gradually diminishing entitles the servant of God to say, "I have fought a good fight." He has not had the same kind of enemies to contend with as the apostle had, but he has had as real enemies. His life has been as much a fight. A fight against ignorance, and evil report, and poverty, and discouragement. A kind of fight, which it requires a brave spirit to carry on, and to overcome in.

It is a life totally different from that of the minister who lives in abundance and even luxury from year to year. Who has his repeated and protracted holidays. Who has frequent help in his pulpit from visitors of note. Who never knows what it is to wait for payment of his salary, or to receive it in small instalments at intervals. Who has no