

**INSTITUTIONAL
WORK FOR THE
COUNTRY CHURCH**

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Institutional Work for the Country Church by Charles E. Hayward

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CHARLES E. HAYWARD

**INSTITUTIONAL
WORK FOR THE
COUNTRY CHURCH**

INSTITUTIONAL WORK
FOR THE
COUNTRY CHURCH.

COMPILED BY
REV. CHARLES E. HAYWARD,

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
REV. CHARLES H. MERRILL.

BURLINGTON
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1900

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For Gift
Rev. Charles C. Hayward

**To those who have so generously
contributed to this work,
is this little book
inscribed.**



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21

22

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24

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

32

33

34

INTRODUCTION.

The word "Institutional" has of late become a name to conjure with in all discussions of church work. So far as these discussions have made clear the ends sought by those who are working under this banner, no one can criticise the use made of the term; but the question has sometimes arisen whether this use has not been too restricted. If by "Institutional Church" is meant an organization that ministers to the social, intellectual, industrial life of the community, as well as to the spiritual, if these are the ends sought and this be the meaning of the term, then there are many churches that are doing this work without taking to themselves the name. And especially is this true of the country churches. While life in communities that are thinly settled has a tendency to develop a marked individuality, and while this individuality has always asserted itself in striking forms in the country church, yet it is this organization more than any other which is potent in counteracting that tendency and drawing all together into one communal family. And working toward this end it has great advantages. Unlike the churches in town or in city, it has few if any competitors in its social mission. At times it stands alone in offering the opportunity for

social gatherings and intercourse. For this reason the Sunday services are well attended, the mid-week prayer meeting "draws" the young, and every appointment for gathering together is joyfully welcomed.

Recognizing the fact that the ends sought by the "Institutional Church" may be gained by those that are not entitled to the name, it is well to call attention to the peculiar advantages the country churches have for securing these ends, and suggest some of the means best adapted for this purpose. Methods must vary with conditions. Country life differs in many ways from life in the city. Organizations must recognize this difference. Imitation that is formal and servile will defeat its ends. The stripling cannot war effectively in Saul's armor. Theories must bear the test of practical experience.

The State of Vermont furnishes a favorable field for the development of the country church. More distinctively than any other state, it is free from the dominance of city life and congested communities. And the record made by the churches of the state shows that they have been ready in some measure to take advantage of their peculiar situation. If there are no organizations that may bear the name "Institutional" there are many that can bear the name "Inspirational," through whose quickening power society has developed along those lines that make for the uplift of all. The contributors to this book have been privileged to work in such churches as collaborators, ministering and ministered unto; they have

shared in the prosperity of these organizations ; they understand their limitations ; they appreciate their advantages. As practical workers, out of the wisdom gained by experience, they speak.

REV. CHARLES H. MERRILL.

CONTENTS.

Preface.

Word of Introduction.....REV. CHARLES H. MERRILL.

1. The Country Church.....REV. CHARLES E. HAYWARD.
 2. The Country Minister....." " " "
 3. Institutional Methods....." " " "
 4. Religious Instruction.....REV. OZORA S. DAVIS.
 5. Men's Sunday Evening Club.....REV. HARRY N. DASCOMB.
 6. The Church Paper.....REV. ROBERT L. SHEAFF.
 7. Home Department of the S. S.MRS. JENNIE W. HART.
 8. Special Work for Boys.....REV. HENRY J. KILBOURN.
 9. Library and Reading Room.....REV. EVAN THOMAS.
 10. Evangelistic Work in Out-districts.....REV. E. F. HERRICK.
 11. Special Work for Girls.....MRS. CORA ROY HAYWARD.
 12. Sociological Canvass.....REV. CHARLES E. HAYWARD.
- Appendix