

Contributions.

Our Work in Cities.

ITS DIFFICULTIES AND ADVANTAGES.

JAS. LEDIARD.

Some five years ago, a special effort was made by our Board to give attention to Gospel work in our cities and towns.

Our churches were for the most part in the country, were established early and grew in numbers and influence, but the time had come when the minds of the brethren were turned to the cities where we were scarcely represented and where it was thought the Gospel in its New Testament simplicity ought to be preached.

I occasionally meet with brethren who are inclined to be impatient at the slow growth of the churches at these city and town points.

There are reasons for this apparently slow growth, which will not occur to the minds of many brethren in the country. First then, I will take the difficulties.

There is the difficulty of competition. I use a commercial term, to be understood. There is a competition just as real, just as keen, and just as proper in things religious as things commercial. It presents a difficulty to us because we are the latest arrivals. Towns and cities are fully occupied. Churches have been established there for years; religious life has become a fixed thing with thousands, and they belong to organizations which are in many respects attractive and can show many good fruits as the result of their activities. Moreover, this denominational life in the cities is the highest production of which denominational life is capable. Wealth, education, numbers, standing, equipment, well trained and carefully organized forces, and indeed all that can be desired to make their work a success, looked at from the stand-point of the thousands we desire to reach—thousands who are at present careless and thoughtless. So this difficulty of competition is felt by every preacher among us. It is real.

Our second difficulty is found in the smallness of our numbers as compared with the army of religious workers around us. Society is made up of two classes so far as this particular matter is concerned. The first, a small class, are already the active members or adherents of the churches to which they belong; and are engaged in Christian work in their own denominational interests. They leave their work and church and preacher no oftener than Disciples leave their work and church and preacher, and are consequently only occasionally present as well disposed listeners. But the large class of indifferent persons who do not care much where they go or what they hear, always drift with the crowd, always go where the services are largest and to them, most attractive. If I had no religious convictions or desires, I would likely do the same. The Methodist church here has 750 members, the Presbyterian about as many, while we have about fifty (50) members. Consequently they have all the immense influence and attraction that comes from the presence of a crowd, while we have all the disadvantages of being the smallest body of persons here, and every preacher knows that the one is a real advantage and the other a real difficulty.

Our third difficulty is the lack of personal work on the part of individual Disciples. In the past we have left our work largely to the preacher, so we had an abundance of good sermons and very few people to listen to them. Now we are surely becoming wiser, still much

of the old difficulty remains. In the churches around us there are scores of workers whose special business it is to visit the sick and poor, to call on all new families coming to the town or district of a city, to look up children for the Sunday school, to invite parents to the church services and to talk freely and lovingly to men and women everywhere of Christ and His salvation.

Let it be borne in mind by every member of the church of Christ that the success of the Gospel will depend largely on individual, personal work. The absence of this is a real difficulty, for which nothing else will compensate.

Last but not least among the difficulties in the way of a rapid growth among our congregations is the steadily advancing tide of denominational life towards the Word of God. Rest assured that slowly, yet surely, the best and purest and most intelligent in all denominations are coming to occupy the very ground we occupy, and to love and practise the truths we love and practise; yet they will not necessarily come to us and unite with our congregations, as their fathers did half a century ago. Then, every honest man who saw the truth as it is in God's Word felt that his church was so far from that truth, that there was nothing else to do but step out from it. Now, I have not said that this is a difficulty in the way of our work, for it is not; it is largely the result of our work, and I rejoice as day after day I see the great leaders of religious thought doing battle for the very principles which fifty years ago were heard nowhere but from Disciple pulpits: but I do say that it is a real difficulty in the way of the rapid growth of our congregations in cities and towns, where denominationalism is at its best.

With the Editor's permission I shall yet have something to say on the advantages of our work and the need for its steady maintenance in our cities. Our growth as congregations will, I am persuaded, be slow; but our influence will and ought to increase day by day, and with wisely directed efforts we can do more than ever in advancing those important truths which have distinguished us in the past. In any case it is our duty, as servants of Jesus Christ, to do His will, and that is to "preach the Word."

Foreign Missions.

CONTRIBUTIONS.

MANITOBA.

A. H. Finch.....\$37 00

ONTARIO.

Mrs. Wm. Burt..... 3 00

Annual Report.

[We give a liberal portion of the Annual Report of Foreign Christian Missionary Society. It is very interesting reading.—EDITOR EVANGELIST.]

FINANCES.

RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS.—The receipts for the year from all sources amount to \$74,070.84. Of this \$3,750 is from the sale of interest-bearing securities. The net income is \$70,320.84. This is a gain over last year of \$10,955.08. The bequests amounted to \$1,751. The year began with a balance on hand of \$4,058.71. The resources for the year were \$78,129.55. The expenditures aggregate \$75,981.74. It will be seen that the expenditures exceed the net income \$5,660.90. This is a serious matter, and one that ought to be carefully considered. It is especially so in view of the fact that the Society has no reserves. It has been our custom to put bequests or parts thereof into interest-bearing securities. In emer-

gencies these securities could be sold. The Society has disposed of all its securities. One encouraging feature of the work is that more churches are giving each year, and giving larger sums. Bequests are good, but bequests are a precarious source of supply. What is needed is a constant stream of offerings pouring into the treasury from one end of the year to the other.

The expense of administration amounts to seven per cent.

THE PRESENT CONDITION OF THE TREASURY.—There is in hand a balance of \$2,147.81. For the past two years the monthly payments have averaged \$6,000. From the time of the Annual Convention until the March offerings, the receipts, as a rule, do not amount to half as much as the expenditures. The Committee or the missionaries must borrow, or the members and friends of the Society must contribute more generally and more generously than they have ever done before. The allowance of the missionaries being such as enables them to live, they can not survive for months on even half-pay. Those whom the Lord has prospered, and they are a great host, ought to keep in mind the men and women who are beating the heat and burden of the day in India, China, Japan, Turkey, and in Europe, and put it within the power of the Executive Committee to pay them promptly, and thereby enable them to provide things honest in the sight of all men. Immediately after the Convention E. T. Williams starts for China, and C. E. Garst for Japan. The Committee is arranging to send a young lady to India to take Miss Robinson's work. Their traveling expenses must be born by the Society.

SPECIAL APPROPRIATIONS.—Special grants were made as follows: \$30 a month for work in two villages near Hurda; \$8 a month for a native worker in Mungeli; \$20 a month for the medical work in India; \$20 a month for a new school in Hurda; \$15 for an orphanage for boys in Hurda; \$670 a quarter for the expenses of the work in Japan; \$1,678.13 for the first quarter; \$898.12 for second; \$1,072.52 for third; and \$1,072.52 for fourth quarter, in China. C. E. Molland was granted \$140 to reimburse him for losses in the riots, and for expenses incurred in sickness. The salary of E. P. Hearndon was increased from \$600 to \$1,000, owing to his marriage. That of F. W. Troy was increased from \$1,200 to \$1,500.

THE OFFERING OF THE SUNDAY-SCHOOLS.—The offerings of the Sunday-schools aggregate \$21,907.09. This is a slight increase only over last year. Still there are many proofs that the interest is spreading among the children. In the years to come they will give far more than at present. There is no department of the work at home more hopeful than this. The next generation will be trained to give from their infancy, and will give ten dollars where the present generation gives one.

THE OFFERING OF THE ENDEAVOR SOCIETIES.—The Endeavor Societies were asked for \$3,000 for a home for girls in Japan. Thus far they have paid \$1,829.86. When all that has been promised is paid, there will be enough in hand for this enterprise. In addition to this, some Societies support a child in school. Many more give through the regular channels of the church. Their names do not appear, but they are interested and at work. More and more the plan of paying two cents a week is being adopted. This promises large results.

OFFERINGS FOR SPECIAL PURPOSES.—There is a disposition in many quarters to give for particular purposes. It

is thought that interest in the work is created and fostered more effectually in this way, than by giving to the work in general. This ought not to be the case. Christian people ought to give because the Lord needs their gifts, and not because they can trace the fruits of their giving. Every department of the work must be sustained. They who give to the general fund have an interest in the whole work. This will simplify the accounts and the work of the Committee, and will be better in every way.

NEW MISSIONARIES.

The last Convention made the following recommendations. That more workers be sent to China to press into the regions beyond, that the call for fifteen families and ten young ladies to labor in Japan be complied with as early and so far as possible, that a medical missionary be engaged to assist in the work in India; that an American evangelist be sent to Turkey, and that a man be employed to take charge of the West London Tabernacle. Accordingly, E. S. Stevens, Dr. Nina Stevens, Miss Lavinia Oldham, and Miss Mary Rioch were selected to labor in Japan; W. E. Cooper to be associated with E. M. Gordon, in Mungeli, India, Miss Elizabeth Ince, Miss A. L. White, Miss Emily Gatrew, and Miss Emma Lyon, to work in China, G. T. Walden to take the West London Tabernacle, E. H. Spring and W. E. Hogg to take charge of Gloucester and Cheltenham. Miss Rioch was sent and will be supported by the Woman's Board of Canada. She will work with the missionaries already in the field, and under the direction of this Society. Miss Gatrew goes at her own charges. W. T. Moore resigned more than a year ago, but served the Tabernacle until the arrival of his successor from Australia. The salary of E. H. Spring was fixed at \$1,200; that of W. E. Hogg at \$500; that of W. E. Cooper at \$180; that of G. T. Walden at \$1,750.

ENLARGEMENT.

A year ago it was recommended that the present missions and missionaries be sustained, and that the work be greatly enlarged. Respecting China, the Executive Committee was recommended to provide a hospital for Doctors Macklin and Huchart, houses for the missionaries in Wuhu and Shanghai, a school for girls and an orphanage in Nankin. Respecting Japan, it was recommended that the request for \$10,000 for buildings be granted. Respecting India, the following were recommended: A bungalow for Hurda; an orphanage for Bilaspur; a dispensary for Dr. Durand; and a chapel for Mungeli. The Chinese hospital is in course of erection. Most of the money pledged has been paid and forwarded. A home has been built in Wuhu. In Japan one house was completed, and \$1,500 was granted for chapels in Tokyo. In addition to these grants, \$250 was sent to India towards an orphanage for boys, \$250 to Birkenhead, towards the new chapel, and \$500 to Constantinople, to pay for repairs on the building used in the mission. To accomplish all that was projected a year ago would require an income twice as large as that of this year.

THE NEEDS OF THE WORK.

More than anything else, the Society needs a supply of qualified young men to go out into the field. It is a strange thing that there is no dearth of women. Whatever may be the cause, the fact is that three women volunteer for one man. The claims of this work ought to be laid upon the young men of the age. It is likely that in a few years, when the members of the Volunteer Bands in the colleges complete their

course, this need will be supplied. But at present this is our supreme need. If we had three times as much money as we have, we could not greatly strengthen the forces in the field. This ought not to be the case, but it is. There is no scarcity of young men for other heroic enterprises. An expedition to the North Pole appeals to hundreds, and they offer themselves. The harvest truly is plentiful; the laborers are few. There is need of prayer that the Lord would send out laborers into the harvest. The Society needs a larger income. The men and women in the field ought to be housed. Their lives will be preserved and prolonged, and their usefulness augmented thereby. The work must be placed under shelter. Chapels, schools, orphanages, and hospitals are needed. The missionaries can not do the work required of them in the absence of proper facilities. The work needs the prayers of the people of God. Nearly every letter from the front contains an earnest request for prayer. "Brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified." We should pray that the Spirit of the Lord may rest upon them, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord. They need wisdom to direct them, and boldness in presenting the message of salvation, and patience and hope that they may not be weary in well-doing. We should pray for them that God would give them favor in the sight of all the people, and make them wise in winning souls, and mighty in pulling down strongholds. The supplication of a righteous man avails much in its working. The united supplications of many thousands will cause the blessing of the Almighty to descend like rain upon the mown grass, and like the showers that water the earth.

FURLONGHS.

The rule in all Missionary Societies is to grant the workers in the field a furlough once in seven or eight years. They live longer and do better work for being allowed to come to the surface, like pearl-divers, to breathe. Engaged in a perpetual conflict with dirt and disease, with ignorance and superstition, living in the awful atmosphere of heathenism, they perceive that virtue goes out of them: After an absence of seven or eight years, a visit home is like being caught up to the third heaven, and hearing unspeakable things; they are refreshed and invigorated in body and mind, and prepared for the hardships and trials awaiting them. The churches derive as much benefit as the missionaries. As they rehearse all that the Lord has done with them and for them, as they tell of the great and effectual doors which he has opened, as they set forth the infinite need and the infinitesimal supply, sluggish consciences are aroused, and cold and selfish hearts are warmed and opened, and pour forth a generous store, like Horeb's rock beneath the prophet's hand. The report of a man who has gauged the misery and the need of the heathen world, and speaks what he knows, and testifies what he has seen, interests and enlists the people as no second hand report can. The work among the churches by our missionaries on furlough has been of inestimable value. The fruit from the seed sown by them will, in after years, shake like Lebanon.

EMPHASIZING THE WORK OF MISSIONS.

It goes with the saying that this work ought to have a far larger place in the thoughts and affections and plans of Christian people. It ought to be more prominent in all the services of the sanctuary. On this more than on any other generation is laid the