

gave strength to her sons and made them the defenders of their own rights and champions of those who needed their protection."

THE LAYMAN'S OPPORTUNITY.

[Paper Read by Rev. Geo. B. Nicholson, of Fort Fairfield, Diocese of Maine, at a meeting of Woodstock Deanery, held on April 11th, 1894, at Bristol, Carleton Co., N. B., and printed by request of the brethren.]

[CONTINUED.]

Upon these simple rules an army of men are working, and working in earnest. The Brotherhood in the U.S.A. has to-day between eleven and twelve hundred Parochial Chapters with upwards of ten thousand members. The Brotherhood in Canada has 150 Chapters. A general organization has been effected in Scotland, also in Australia, but I am unable to state the number of Chapters or numbers. And now the news comes that at last the movement is being agitated in the Mother Church, and an Acting Secretary has been appointed to facilitate its progress.

Just think of it! Fifteen thousand men pledged to pray every day for the spread of Christ's Kingdom among men! 15,000 men. "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven."

If those men only knew—if they would only prove faithful—what a power there might be in the prayers alone, ascending daily from 15,000 hearts. They are not all faithful; that can hardly be expected. In that sacred band by the Galilean lake there was one faithless one. They are not all faithful, but in the main they are heartily in earnest. We must not lose sight of the encouragement that there is where the work is hard, and the visible results are meagre, when the toiling brother thinks that he is one of 15,000, all praying for the same result, and for God's blessing upon their mutual labor.

I would call particular attention to the various points laid down in the extract from the Constitution as quoted:

1st. "The sole object of the Brotherhood of St. Andrew is the spread of Christ's Kingdom among young men."

This object has from first to last been rigidly adhered to. Every organization of men state the object for which it is formed in its constitution, but often—I may say generally—for the purpose of promoting fraternity and sociability, or in order to attract others, or to raise money to carry out its purpose such organization will plan and carry out picnics, excursions, entertainments, parties, etc., etc. The Brotherhood has religiously refrained from everything of the sort. Considering itself a society to accomplish spiritual things by spiritual means, it has considered all such things illegitimate as methods of Brotherhood work. I do not mean to say that its members refuse to help in the work necessary to carry out a Sunday School Picnic or a Parish Reception. I simply mean that as a Brotherhood they have nothing to do with such things. They try to keep in view the sole object, which is "the spread of Christ's Kingdom among young men." In a few instances Chapters have undertaken the management of social events, and it has generally been taken as an indication that its members failed completely to realize the meaning of the Order to which they belonged. In nearly every case it was only the beginning of the end.

2nd. "To this end every man desiring to become a member must pledge himself to obey the Rules of the Brotherhood so long as he shall be a member."

Here is required a definite pledge to obey two rules. The rules are so clearly stated that none may misunderstand them. But how does a man know that he can carry out this pledge? In nearly all Chapters provision is made for a term of probation varying from one month to six. At the beginning of this period the Brotherhood, its Rules and methods are explained to the candidate, and he is bidden to make a trial of them. He is thus enabled to pledge himself when the time comes, or else withdraw, with a full understanding of what will be required of him as a member.

3rd. "The Rule of Prayer is to pray daily for the spread of Christ's Kingdom among young men, and for God's blessing upon the labors of the Brotherhood."

This rule is simple and direct. The Brotherhood being an organization for hard work of a distinctly religious character, membership in it has no attractiveness except for men who are in the habit of praying to God at least once a day, if not oftener. There is therefore no difficulty in this first Rule. It may be kept by offering the petition, "Thy Kingdom come," with a special intention for this object, or it may be by using the prayers printed in the Brotherhood Manual, or in any manner which best suits each individual member. The only obligation is to carry the Brotherhood and its object daily before God's throne for His blessing.

4th. "The Rule of Service is to make an earnest effort each week to bring at least one young man within the hearing of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as set forth in the services of the Church and in young men's Bible classes."

Here is a Rule just as simple as the first, but so varying in its application that many men—unused to personal religious work—find it difficult to fulfil it to the satisfaction of their own conscience. In cities and larger towns—in a well organized chapter under an efficient director—it is not difficult for men to find ample scope for effort under this Rule. There are the hotels, with commercial travellers coming and going, to whom personal or written invitations to the services may be extended. There are various public institutions or work-shops where men are found in large numbers, to whom the Gospel may be carried or invitations extended to service. There are opportunities to arrange special services for men with noted preachers; and then there are the strangers who are always making their appearance at church, and who may be welcomed,—whose acquaintance may be sought,—who may be visited,—and oftentimes influenced to become permanent worshippers at the church.

But these means of work are closed, or very limited in rural districts, and it is sometimes difficult to see just how in these places the second rule can be carried out. Let me quote some words from the Brotherhood Manual upon the subject:

"The Rule of Service seems at first sight almost impracticable, except in large cities. But when we consider that it must be construed by sanctified common sense; when we understand that any word or act said or done with the sincere purpose to bring a young man nearer the Church, or the Church nearer the man, or to bring about a personal relationship between the Brother and the man, which will enable the former to exert personal influence to that end; when we understand that such a word or act is an "earnest effort," the Rule becomes simple and practicable enough. It means the consecration of a man's common sense, common sympathy and common influence to "the spread of Christ's Kingdom among young men," and it defines the least outward and visible sign of that consecration allowable in a Brother of St. Andrew. The Rule does not have in view a list of fifty-two mechanical efforts each year, but souls won to

Christ and His Church. Often the best results are obtained by repeated efforts to win one man. In practice, the faithful carrying out of the spirit of the Rule soon makes a literal performance simple and easy; for, wherever the spirit has been carried out, there so many strangers have been attracted to the services, Bible classes and other gatherings, that in the simple exercise of Christian courtesy and hospitality, an opportunity has been given every member to directly invite and urge a young man to again come "within hearing of the Gospel of Jesus Christ."

When your man is once in earnest about his work he will find opportunities no matter how he may be situated. It is the work of the Brotherhood to stimulate this earnestness.

The most effectual agent in Brotherhood success has ever been the Young Man's Bible Class. This should be conducted by the Rector—or better still by an earnest layman, if one can be found who is capable and willing to undertake the responsibility. He should be a man who is attractive to young men, and should try to deal with problems which are of interest to young manhood everywhere. Such a class with a few manly earnest fellows in it will always have its attraction and it will not be hard to draw others to it.

Every member should have cards of invitation, and they must not hesitate to use them and follow them up in all legitimate ways.

A man once secured for the class can be kept in sight by the Chapter. He will be remembered in their prayers;—they will show a friendly interest in him;—one method failing they will try another;—and who will doubt, that if such methods are faithfully pursued some may be brought to the Saviour,—to repentance—to Holy Baptism or Confirmation—and become helpful laborers in the Lord's Vineyard.

The detail work of the Brotherhood is divided according to local circumstances among various committees. There is the Hotel Committee—the Visiting Committee—the Hospitality Committee, &c., &c. The members serve as ushers at church. When a stranger is unfamiliar with the service a member finds a seat with him and helps him with the "places" in the Prayer Book. After service he is not allowed to go without a cordial invitation to come again. If possible he is detained and introduced to the Rector. The whole system gives a feeling of warmth and welcome which, until the rise of the Brotherhood, was almost universally lacking in the atmosphere of our churches.

5th.—"Any organization of young men in any Parish or Mission of the P. E. Church, effected under this name, and with the approval of the rector or minister in charge, for this object," &c., &c., "is entitled to become a Chapter."

In this article the Brotherhood places itself entirely under the control of the Parochial clergy. No Chapter is chartered without the consent of its Parish Priest. None may continue to exist if his approval be withdrawn.

Later the Council took a further step, resolving to enter the jurisdiction of no Bishop, without first submitting to him a statement of the Brotherhood objects, and seeking his permission and blessing. I might make almost countless quotations from Bishops and Priests, who have testified to the value of the work of the Brotherhood, but your time and patience, and the limits of this paper forbid. I will therefore content myself with repeating the words contained in the Report of *The Committee on the State of the Church*, presented to the last General Convention.

"And working . . . in a general work of marvellous power is the Brotherhood of St. Andrew. It seems but yesterday since the General Committee had the privilege of joining in the celebration of its first anniversary at Chicago in the year 1886. To-day it has spread