

ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTIONS.

MISSION WORK.

At our Annual Meeting last year we expected to have an evangelist in the Provinces all the time. We need not stop here to say why our expectations were not realized. We did the next best thing in using all our available help, and the results are very encouraging. Bro. Nowlan has done a good work in Charlotte Co., N. B. Bro. Dwyer has been successful in Cornwallis, N. S. Bro. Gates and the writer labored a few weeks in Digby Co., N. S., opening the way for another meeting this Fall. The success, although not as great as we would wish, has intensified the interest and the importance of our Mission Work. We never saw a more determined sentiment for pushing this work than was manifested at our last Annual Meeting. The amount of good accomplished the last year has inspired all—who are familiar with the work and the difficulties to be met—with a hope of still greater success, and the great necessity of a more united effort on the part of all our brethren. All can see, even the casual observer, that golden opportunities are before us. Now is the time to do what our hands find to do, with all our might. So shut the gates of the past and waste no time in idle regrets over our mistakes. Let us not look upon the things that are behind, and let us remember also that the future is hid from our eyes. We have the present only in which to work, and trust, and hope, knowing that out of the future comes our present, and what we make our present will determine our future.

One thing is very plainly seen, of which it will be well for every one to make a special note, i. e. that every church that co-operates in the general interest of the cause is more or less successful in its own local interest. When a church takes an interest in others, then, and not till then, will others take an interest in them. There is no reason why every locality where the Disciples are found should not be encouraged and built up, and become the instruments in doing much good in the general interest of the churches. Let every church, and those who are living without church privileges, enter heartily into this Mission Work and then their wants will soon be known. The history of the church in Leonardville, where our Annual was held, is a fine illustration of the benefits of Mission Work. About three years ago the Mission Board sent the evangelist down there. He found a few brethren struggling for an existence. They were holding their meetings in a Hall. Now they have a neat and beautiful house that will seat between three and four hundred. The church numbers sixty or more, and now they are able to welcome and accommodate the best and largest Annual Meeting we ever had. This is only one case among others that show the need and the success of Mission Work. It ought to impress every lover of the Lord with the necessity of co-operating in this grand work. If there are any brethren who feel that the work is not prospering in their own locality, they will find the reason why in the fact of their own lack of interest in the Mission Work. We are not guessing when we say, that the church that has little interest in the general interest of the cause, has very little if any prosperity in their own. They are making the same mistake the little boy made when he got into the tub and tried to lift himself up. We can help lift some one else up, but some one must help lift us up. We can't lift ourselves up. To help others is to help ourselves. If all our brethren could be induced to enter into this co-operating work to bind their substantial interest, the time would soon come when all our churches would be in a prosperous condition, the result of which would be the

building up of our churches. This idea of getting all our churches in the Maritime Provinces interested in this work was emphasized at our Annual Meeting. The brethren all over the two Provinces may expect to hear something on this question frequently during the year. We know that our brethren are interested in this blessed work and they will unite their hearts and interest in building up the cause of God. Our earnest appeal is that we may give our special attention to this work that has been so successfully begun.

Since our sisters have taken hold of this work we feel even more confident of still greater success. None are better fitted for this work, being the "better half" we look for better work and better results, and we will not be disappointed. May the Lord spare us another year and help us to do more than we have ever done.

H. MURRAY.

CHURCH EDIFICATION.

The original (*oikodomeo*) primarily means to build a house, to construct, to erect. *Specifically*, to rebuild, to renew a building decayed or damaged. *Topically*, to build, to establish, to confirm, spoken of the Christian Church and its members, who are thus compared to a building, a temple of God, erected upon the one and only foundation,—Jesus Christ,—and even built up progressively and unceasingly more and more from the foundation. *Internally*, to build up in the faith, to edify, to cause to advance in divine life.

It is clear that this word means both to add to the church as well as to edify those already added, to instruct and develop the membership of a local church. Our former work has been largely that of converting sinners, and omitting the building up. Hence, we have a greater need than all other people of systematic work of the pastor, whose duty is to train the young disciples in song, in prayer, and in reading the Holy Scriptures. The former system has been to keep closed the mouths of the members that are females. The latter must be to edify all, both male and female. The teacher who claims otherwise has not learned the lesson, "Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty." To add material to the church is an important work, but more to build them up, and confirm them in the faith of the Gospel of Christ. True, we can prepare the material largely in our evangelistic work of preaching the gospel and bringing souls to Christ, but this new material does not exist in its completion, but needs gradual and systematic development in the use of the keen eye, the artistic use of the hand, and the delicate touch of the chisel, that this marble in the rough may be made a thing of beauty and grace. Every member added to the church, whether male or female, as God is no respecter of persons, has from one to ten talents, and will be a source of strength or weakness to the church, accordingly as he or she is or is not properly trained or cultivated. The idea that women are ciphers in the great family of God's people, is as false as if said of them in the domestic relation, and belongs to the "Dark Ages," and has no authority in the gospel of Christ. While I grant that they are not officers or overseers in the absolute sense, yet they are helpers in the work of the Lord. They are not the chief rulers in the domestic relation, yet there are those in the family that they can admonish, instruct, build up and edify. Cultivation in the spiritual household is as essential as in the domestic. Too many, far too many, belong to the class that are not cultivated, and have become careless and indifferent to all church work; hence there is scarcely a church doing its whole duty, either toward the world or its babes in Christ. There is not a church known to any of us, that is doing all that it can in a systematic precision that ought to prevail. There is too much of the indifferent style of work. There is too much taking it for granted

that things will come around all right without going to work energetically to bring them around successfully.

Certain ones do the praying because they have done it in the absence of the minister for the many years past in the church's history, and none of the new members are encouraged to pray. The singing, reading, exhortation, and praying, ought not to be monopolized by the preacher or aged members. The humblest member ought to be made to feel that they are an important factor in the church, and a power for good. Every one should be taught that they have glorious possibilities before them. These humble members' ability to work depends upon their training that they have received from those who have the spiritual oversight of them.

The man or woman of one talent may not illumine so vast an area, but the star may shine as bright as the planet. They may not work on so large a scale as their gifted brethren, but it does not follow that they should not work at all.

But the question is, How shall every talent be made to yield its usury? In other words, How shall every member of the church become useful, be made to feel the important stations that they are capable of occupying, and in so doing contribute largely to the church's power? There is no question among the Disciples of more practical importance, and it demands the best thought and experience of our most efficient pastors. Solve it wisely, put it into practical use, and the power and ability of the church will be increased many fold, and the unused available material will be brought into activity, and idlers will be diminished until there will not be found an idler in the church, not one talent hidden away unused. Can not this end be reached, can not this efficiency be attained? Is it surely ideal and fanciful, or can we not attain to something grand in the edification of the churches of Christ, so as to bring all our powers to bear in the work of the Lord? The pastor may and does abuse his powers in a manner neither wise or scriptural. He does everything instead of getting everybody to do something. He acts pastor, evangelist, elder, deacon, and financial and building committee, or he becomes a carryall or church omnibus. He does all the reading, scripture and hymns, does the public and private praying, with a slight exception, visit and cares for the sick, and reclaims the wayward. This course will ultimately destroy the powers of any church, yet this is the rule under which many are working, and will work until they are dead.

If a private member is asked to pray in public, he asks in turn to be excused, because he has not been properly trained by those whose duty it was to drill the new recruits for active service. Had they been prepared by constant drill they might have entered into this service with alacrity and delight, not only to themselves, but with edification to others. Every young man in the church ought to be put to work so as to develop him, and indicate to him and others what he is most capable of doing in the work of the Lord. The same is none the less true of young women. The women have kept apace with us in all good works, and have taken the lead in "Foreign Missions." The women being a silent force among us is a thing of the past, and it is not warranted by the word of God or common sense. Shall we, as evangelists, encompass our large domains, planting beautiful and healthful vines in the "Garden of the Lord," and then leave them uncultivated and unpruned, expecting to gather abundant fruits unto the harvest of the Lord?

What shall our remedy be? The whole church should be converted thoroughly into active working Disciples. This thought we must never forget or outgrow. The earnest and close study of that most edifying book must edify all the true Disciples of Jesus Christ. For the neglect of the past we must