

The Industrial Guild of the Great Commission.

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Yes, the new organization appears to have a very lengthy name, but—there are others; for instance, The Woman's Baptist Missionary Union, The American Baptist Publication Society, The Baptist Young People's Union of America, The Epworth League of Christian Endeavor, and The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, all of which have managed to live and do good work. For short we call our Society the Guild. The full name, like a king's titles, simply indicates its place and purpose.

In these days when churches are wearied with organizing, any new thing in that line must be prepared to give some large, seven-by-nine, reasons why sentence of death should not be passed upon it, else it is likely to be bundled out to the guillotine with scant ceremony. By grace of the editor let me therefore advance a few such reasons for the Guild.

The Industrial Guild of the Great Commission is an organization which was formed largely as an experiment last spring at Mount View, a tributary of the Middle Sackville Baptist Church. Its industrial character and wholly missionary in purpose, as its name is designed to show. In its inception and progress thus far it has been so successful that it would seem to have been "A plant of God's own planting," and hence a thing worthy the consideration of others who may be interested in anything calculated to advance the interests of the kingdom of Christ on earth. It has demonstrated, in terms of hard cash its right, at least, to a fair hearing. For convenience sake I shall speak of: What led to the organization of the Guild; The makeup of the Guild, and What the Guild has done and is designed to do.

I. What Led to the Organization of the Guild. The consideration of certain facts led to it. For example,

(1) That Jesus Christ is still waiting for his command, "Go ye into all the world," to be carried out. That there are thousands of young men and women whom God has raised up to go who cannot go because the Mission Boards have no money wherewith to send them; and the Boards have no money wherewith to send them because the money is locked up in the breeches pockets of God's people; that it is so locked up because his people have not been sufficiently trained to give, and that, in order to train a man to give he must be caught young. It is painful to witness the church chasing the man whose fingers have stiffened around his dollar. A hard time she has of it to make him let go.

(2) That the youths of to-day form the churches of to-morrow; that it is the business of the church to train them to benevolence, and to "do it NOW"; and that the best way to do it now is by doing it. No lessons are riveted on the brain like those that are shaped into form in the concrete under our own hand. Pedagogy recognizes this when it praises and provides for the kindergarten, sloyd and manual training. The objective world reacts on the subjective with profit.

(3) That the trend of the age is altruistic and missionary. Herbert Spencer, looking back on the changes of sentiment that have taken place, and are now taking place, thinks it not only possible but probable that "It will become a matter of wonder that there should ever have existed those who, though it admirable to enjoy without working at the expense of others who worked without enjoying." An American millionaire tells us "it is a disgrace to die rich," and Prof. Coe complains that less than three per cent. of the hymns in a certain prominent hymnal, deal with Christ and Christian activity in an objective spirit; and, in that symptom he finds a chief reason why men do not attend church in greater numbers. Be that as it may, surely, the root of Christianity is altruism, and churches and men are mighty only as they are altruistic. The inspiring Ecumenical Conferences of the last decade are but the prophecies of the approaching day when the church shall deem it her chief function to raise men and money for missions.

(4) That there are three factors in the production of wealth—land, labor and capital, all of which may generally be found available in any rural community.

These and other considerations seemed to constitute a kind of call to go out and till some of the unclaimed bog lands of the public domain. There is much latent power in nature, and in the impulsive and unsoured young lives around us, but the question is, how to harness it to the great purposes of life. The Guild is one modest attempt to answer that difficult question. The various "talent" schemes which from time to time appear, have recognized and sought to meet it, but so far as I know, they have generally been sporadic, unorganized or loosely organized, and adapted chiefly to urban communities. They are apt to be ephemeral, and they do good while they live, but why not systematize and crystallize all this effort into one co-operative productive scheme which should have for its objective the greatest task that ever challenged the faculties of man, and for its motive the "G" and the "L" of the great commission of earth's rightful Lord, our King, Emmanuel?

II. The Makeup of the Guild. It is a co-operative productive society. Unlike all the other organizations of the church, it deals primarily with things and enters into the open markets of the world, doing business in be-

half of the King of Heaven it is true, but asking no favors of anyone on that account. The whole body is composed of group units of production called Firms. These firms may have one or more members, and they go under various styles. Maybe it is a father and his seven-year-old son who are responsible to the Guild for the planting of a bushel of potatoes, and the hoeing, picking, sorting and bagging of the increase thereof. In that case the firm is known on the books as, say, Elliott & Son. Maybe it is two neighbor boys of fourteen who form a partnership as Njck & Tuck. Or again it may be a boy of sixteen or seventeen who takes into partnership with him his sister of fourteen and his brother of ten. In our Guild last year it was just such a firm, Jas. Cook & Co., (James, Ernest and Lottie, children of Deacon Cook) that won first place by producing the largest returns of the season. We want the little people in it, and, generally they are coazy to get in. In this case the older ones are glad to have them in, since in prospect it lightens their labors. The father, too, has a glow of satisfaction in feeling that for once anyway he is leading his young hopeful in the good way; and the juvenile head of the other firm feels the importance of being at the front of the noble profession that is marching in the right direction and going to bring something tangible to pass.

As the Guild aims to inculcate a manly and womanly spirit of independence in its members, no gratuities are received. There are other noble missionary organizations open to receive them. The Guild has an abundance of labor in the stout young arms and willing hearts, but it requires land, seed, and maybe some fertilizer to make that labor productive. The capital for these is found in the characters of the firms. Integrity has a commercial value on the street, and why not in these clean young lives? The firms buy the seed (and fertilizer if any is needed) and rent the necessary land on their own credit. The cost of this becomes a first charge against the crop in the fall. They present their accounts made out on blank bill heads, to the commissioners. All above the cost, of production goes to missions. The teacher of the public school will gladly put the form on the blackboard for them. These bills are passed by the commissioners and paid by the treasurer on the annual day of returns. Incidentally they get a little training in business. The commissioners' report at the public meeting shows in detail what each firm has done.

The young folks are apt to take eagerly to the proposition early in the spring, for children love action, but, alas! if their enthusiasm is quickly kindled it as speedily dies again, and by the time dogdays have arrived the whole scheme is in danger of falling down. Hoeing potatoes and picking bugs in the hot sun, while the trout are sleeping in the shade of the willows and the "deephole" is silently calling him to wash and be clean, seems to little Billy a sin against nature. So he suggests that they go and have a swim and come back after supper. It is three weeks before they get back, and meanwhile the bugs have walked off with the crops. To guard against this, two or three young men are chosen as commissioners. These young men are the strategic men in the enterprise. They should be old enough to have the necessary technical knowledge, without being so old as to be weighed down with the cares of a family and farm, and young enough to be mobile and in touch with the young life around them. The Guild relies on them to keep an eye on the various crops and to rally with a kindly word of banter, those who may have been wanting in attention to business. Boys have a tender spot if you can only find it.

The Guild is closely related to the church, as a subsidiary organization. It aims to create new wealth, not to divert streams from the mills already grinding and to create in the man of to-morrow such a spirit of benevolence as will enable him to discharge his responsibilities toward all the great claims of the kingdom, as he comes up to them. That it may be clear that the church is head and not tail of the kite, the pastor (or the two senior deacons where there is no pastor) appoints the commissioners. Moreover these are the important men, and it is not well to leave their selection to popular vote, since popular vote half the time doesn't know what it is doing. Free countries are really ruled by committees. The pastor, if he be a producer, is honorary president of the Guild; and presides, assisted by the president, at the public meeting on the annual day of returns. This strengthens the Guild by giving it not only his tactful assistance, but through him the countenance and moral support of the whole church. The usual officers are elected by ballot, but the president must be chosen from among the commissioners. This may tend to centralization of power, but inasmuch as the commissioners are cabinet officers, supposed to outline and submit a policy for the year, it would hardly do to have the chief executive officer ignored in their counsels. When it comes to the cold realities of commerce centralization is what is wanted anyway. Special provision is made for those who want to join the Guild and are not free to engage in the chosen industry. They may present an equivalent in cash, only it must be cash definitely earned for the purpose of accomplishing the great task.

III. What the Guild has done and is designed to do. The Guild has been thus far of course an experiment, but the experiment has been so successful as to suggest greater things for it in the providence of God. The Guild had thirty one members in sixteen firms last year. The mem-

bers ranged in age from five to forty five; but more than 50 per cent were under seventeen years of age. There were cheerful volunteers for no others were wanted, and they were in at the finish. They voted to have each firm produce a bushel of potatoes and care for the product. The crop was affected the crop considerably, yet we had a net profit of \$36.64 clear for missions, after paying for rent, seed and fertilizer. In many instances these were offered gratuitously declined with thanks, and I am now more confident the course on our part has gone far to strengthen public confidence in us. The firm I was in paid fifty cents for seed and twenty five cents for rent, though both were gratuitously pressed on us. The gathering for organization had all the enthusiasm of a political meeting, and the annual public meeting on returns day showed something deeper yet, a wide spread interest in what had been accomplished and the glad presence of the blessed Master himself, approving all.

Thirty six dollars and sixty four cents may not seem a very large sum, but there are one or two things to be said about it. First it is largely new wealth; secondly, it wasn't grown on missionary soil, for the giving to missions of the whole settlement so far as the church records of the preceding year show, did not amount to more than ten cents, if we except a dollar or two to the Woman's Missionary Aid Society. Thirdly, the land is not the best, and there was nothing in the constituency to give any a priori guarantee of success. Indeed the attempt was regarded even by well wishers as a very doubtful expenditure of energy. That it has been an unqualified success from start to finish may perhaps be accounted for on the ground that the great Author of missions has been pleased to set his seal to our feeble and very obscure attempt in the line of the great task he so long ago assigned.

"Where a man's treasure is there will his heart be also." The door is now open for enlargement of soul by instruction in world needs. The boy's interest, and the man's for that part, now follow his dollars without solicitation, and he is anxious to know what became of them and what they are doing. He learned independence, and he learned liberality and the joy of it, by earning and giving something that was worth while. Many people have no joy in giving because they give just enough to the Lord to make them feel mean. Every time the boy hoed a hill he did an utterly unselfish act and was by so much a better man. Every time he was tempted to bag a bad potatoe for sale he was up against a great temptation to petty commercial dishonesty in order to make a big showing. The Guild helped him over that by teaching him to throw away two good potatoes rather than put one doubtful one in, since the Lord doesn't sell bad potatoes and we were doing business for him. We all found ourselves greater by bracing up to the great world-task and positively enjoyed our labor of love in the fields. Give a boy ten years of such education and he will know somewhat beyond his own parish and feel for it too. As of old, our people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.

As to what the Guild is designed to do, it may be said that it can be worked in any rural or semi-rural community where two or three earnest, level headed young men or women can be got to take it in hand. It is adapted to the world. We raised potatoes, but if we were in the wheat belt we should have put in a bushel of wheat instead. In the fruit belt a strawberry bed or an orange or apple tree and in small towns an onion bed or bean stalk in the back yard, anything to save the boys of the present and the man, the church, and the world of the future. I see no reason why several thousand dollars for missions should not be raised this year by this means in these provinces, nor why, ultimately, throughout this continent, and the world, a million or more every year should not be raised and nobody feel it, especially since God is the silent partner and heaviest contributor in the concern.

The genius of the Guild is essentially undenominational. I am a Baptist from the crown of my head downward, but I say better a thousand times a Methodist, a Presbyterian, or an Anglican missionary than no missionary. God bless them all. They are noble men and have done good work. Therefore where there is not sufficient energy in a settlement to have one or more denominational Guilds, let them unite in love and have one strong one operated on a pro rata basis of division. The lesser may not be sacrificed, but neither should it take precedence of the larger truth. We do not love our denomination the less but the world more. Should anyone be so interested as to wish to organize a Guild, a copy of our constitution and bye-laws will gladly be sent on application, either to the writer, or to the secretary of the Guild—Mr. Wm. Wheaton, Mount View, N. B.

The Sin of Saul.

The character of Saul, the first King of Israel is etched on the pages of the Book of Samuel with dramatic precision and clearness. We know only a few of the incidents of his long reign, but those that are recorded are thoroughly typical. They are not opaque, we see through them as through a lens, and each one of them reveals the same personality.

What does a careful study of them all reveal but this, that the essential fault of Saul was that lack of faith which