

EXTRA.

The HOME MISSIONARY

Prise. Shine: for
Thy light is Come, and the Glory of the Lord is Risen upon thee

BATTLE CREEK, MICH., U. S. A., NOVEMBER, 1896.

PLANS FOR FUTURE WORK.

WHEN the question of selling by subscription, books treating upon the different phases of the third angel's message was first suggested, there were two very strong arguments presented, to prove that our books could not be successfully sold in that way.

The first objection used was that there were no experienced canvassers to sell these books, and the second objection was that there was no demand for books of such a character. The first objection was met by saying that in the absence of experienced agents, we could go to work and develop some. To the second objection, it was answered: "Create a demand for our books, by circulating them extensively;" reasoning that as the books were read, they would create a demand for themselves, provided the agents followed proper methods.

Those to whom was committed in the early experience of the canvassing work the responsibility of formulating plans for conducting the same, gave much careful thought to the work assigned to them. Whether the plans that were recommended were good ones or not, we will ask the reader to consider this one point; viz., that during the past eight years, our canvassers have sold an amount of subscription books, ranging from \$250,000 to \$819,749 a year.

While we have in the past met with quite gratifying success in following present plans, this question has lately been urged upon our attention; viz., How shall we meet the numerous difficulties that have recently arisen in connection with this work? Prominent among these are the

cries of "hard times," "no work," "small pay," "so many books now that we do not need any more," and many others that might be mentioned.

Any one that has carefully watched the advancement of the third angel's message for a few years, cannot fail to be impressed with the thought that this is a progressive message, and that to keep pace with it, our plans of labor must also be progressive, keeping pace with the opening providence of God. In the past it has been almost a universal custom to canvass a given territory for a certain book, then move to another territory and canvass it for the same book, then to another and still another as rapidly as the territory is canvassed. This plan always obliges the agent to do two unpleasant things: First, to make frequent and oftentimes expensive moves, and second, constantly to work among strangers. To meet numerous difficulties that have lately arisen, and at the same time, to be making progress in this work, we would suggest a little change in our present plan of canvassing a given territory with our books.

We believe that the time has fully come for us to take an advance step, and so plan our work as to recanvass the same territory from one to four times a year for different books, until the same agent has canvassed that territory at least once for each of our different subscription books. For several years this plan has been recommended by some, practised by a few, and endorsed by many. But while it has not been adopted by the majority of our canvassers, a few have followed it to a considerable extent, and have by practical experience demonstrated its advantages over that so generally followed by

our agents. We offer a few reasons why the plan of recanvassing territory for different books is far superior to that of working in new territory all the time.

1. After the first canvass, the agent is then working among friends and acquaintances rather than strangers, and therefore his work is not only more pleasant, but is more successful; because the people are acquainted with the agent, and, knowing him to be upright, are not afraid to purchase of him.

2. Laboring thus among acquaintances, his work becomes one of pleasure, and so nine tenths of the usual dread of meeting strangers, which troubles so many agents, is removed.

3. Because of this acquaintance with the people, an agent is enabled to perform his work with a far less expenditure of vital force, because many will give an order for the book upon the strength of the agent's recommendation, without a formal canvass for it—a point of vital importance to any canvasser.

4. The agent being permanently located, avoids a great amount of expense, caused by frequently changing one's territory.

5. Agents working country territory may not be able to be at home every night, but by the use of a team, they can, by locating as nearly as possible in the center of their territory, be at home at least once a week, and during such time as they are obliged to board and lodge away from home, they can manage to stop with friends who are pleased to welcome them to their best accommodations.

6. In many places under the present arrangement an agent meets with little or no success, because the people are accustomed to purchase their books at regular intervals of an agent whom they have patronized for years. By recanvassing the territory over and over, and becoming permanent in a given place, our agents would soon have a regular list of customers, and this list would be constantly increasing.

7. There are persons who have hitherto considered it impossible for them to leave home and enter the work, on account of obligations due to their families (especially in the case where there are boys from fourteen to eighteen years of age, who need a father's care). Such men can secure

proper territory, locate their families on a small place of a few acres, as nearly as possible in the center of their territory, and thus not only provide a home for the family, but furnish some healthful work for the boys. The father can canvass five days each week, and then have one day at home in which to care for and direct the work of the family. This plan would bring many a good agent in the field, who otherwise would not feel free to enter it.

8. Having a permanent home, he is able to secure regular meals of proper food, well cooked and neatly served, and also a regular place in which to sleep. Many conscientious, devoted, God-fearing agents, have been driven from the field in the past for no other reason than this,—they could not endure the food upon which they were obliged to subsist.

9. In many places, agents are unable to meet with any reasonable degree of success, from the fact that the people have in one way or another been defrauded by some book agent. Nothing but a personal acquaintance with the people will enable our agents to reap success in such territory, and there is much of it.

10. An agent passing to and fro in the streets of a territory which he has canvassed over two or more times, is a silent but constant reminder to the people, of what they have read in the books which they obtained of him. They might notice a thousand strangers, and never think of their book, or what they had read in it.

11. Passing and repassing over the same territory, an agent has a golden opportunity to briefly answer proper inquiries, remove objections that may arise, and direct in the intelligent reading of the different books.

12. An agent would of course become well acquainted with different interested ones living in his territory, and thus he could easily bring together for Bible study those who, without his efforts, would have remained entirely ignorant of each other.

Had the plan herein advocated been followed during the past few years, we might now have had hundreds, yes thousands of companies of believers in present truth, in different parts of the land, where now there are none.

F. L. MEAD.

THE BULLETIN.

We trust you will not neglect to renew your subscription to the "General Conference Bulletin" as soon as you read this notice. All subscriptions expire with the November issue, and should be renewed at once so as to secure the extras issued during the next General Conference.

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IMMEDIATE WORK.

SOME one has truthfully said: "Time is such a precious thing that God gives only one moment of it at once."

Doubtless many who read these lines have often desired and even resolved that at some future time they would engage more actively in the work of the Lord; but for various reasons, they find it inconvenient to engage in the work at the present time, and so keep procrastinating. O that all might realize the value of the present, and then improve it wisely. Much has been done in circulating our different books and pamphlets; but we believe there is a great deal more to be accomplished in this direction. Instead of leaving the sale of our bound books, especially our small ones, wholly to the regular canvassers, there ought to be in every church a regular corps of organized workers, and an effort made to canvass as much of the adjacent territory as possible, for such books as those mentioned in this number, and also for the *Signs of the Times*, the *American Sentinel*, and a large number of excellent pamphlets, tracts, etc., doing this work upon the same plan as that suggested for the regular canvassers in an article which appears in another column of this paper.

It is very common for people to purchase quite a supply of books during the holidays. Why should not our books be pushed to the front, where people can get them? Our books are well written, and well illustrated, their influence is healthful and elevating, and the people are generally pleased with them. Why not crowd them into the market before it is filled with books of less value? If our people would take hold of this work as it is their privilege to do, the various publishing houses would be kept busy night and day to supply the demand made upon them.

Some may urge that we cannot sell books successfully on account of the hard times. While it is true that we have hard times, it is also true that more money was spent last year for intoxicating liquors, tea and coffee, all of which are injurious both physically and mentally, than was spent the year before. People spend money in spite of hard times. We need have no hesitation toward urging people to buy our good books.

In spite of the hard times, facts and figures bear us out in stating that if we had had one hundred more agents in 1895 than we had in 1891, — the year our canvassers made their largest record, — they would have sold in 1895 as many books as were sold in 1891. Question: Why did we not have them? If our brethren and sisters in the various churches would take hold of this work as it is their privilege, and as it is in their power to do, all would be happily surprised at the amount of books that would be sold, each year, and they would reap a great spiritual blessing besides.

How often we hear of some one regretting that there are so few workers in the field; and indeed this condition is to be regretted, for there is talent enough among this people. If we were fully consecrated to the Lord and his work, there would be as many ministers in the field as the tithes would support; there would be as many students in our colleges and academies as the present buildings could accommodate; there would be as many students at the sanitariums seeking a fitting for medical usefulness as these institutions could accommodate; and there would be enough devoted canvassers so that every conference would be able to place on an average, two in every county, and a like number, proportionate to the population, in every city. Besides these there would be

scores of active home missionary workers who would be doing aggressive work with periodicals and tracts, by correspondence, and by personal work among their neighbors and friends.

F. L. MEAD.

GOD'S APPOINTED MESSENGER.

FROM a letter by Mrs. E. G. White, dated June 14, 1896, we extract the following :—

“I cannot see why the canvassing work is not as good and successful a work as can be done for the Lord. Canvassers can become acquainted with the people, they can pray with them, and can understand their true necessities.

“From the light which God has given me, there is much responsibility resting upon the canvassers. They should go to their work prepared to explain the Scriptures, and nothing should be said or done to bind their hands. If they put their trust in the Lord as they travel from place to place, the angels of God will be round about them, giving them words to speak which will bring light and hope and courage to many souls. Were it not for the work of the canvassers, many would never hear the truth.

“Of all the gifts which God has given to man, none is more noble or a greater blessing than the gift of speech, if it is sanctified by the Holy Spirit. It is with the tongue we convince and persuade; with it we offer prayer and praise to God, and with it we convey rich thoughts of the Redeemer's love. By this work the canvasser can scatter the seeds of truth, causing the light from the word of God to shine into many minds.

“I sincerely hope that no mind will receive the impression that it belittles a minister of the gospel to canvass. Hear the apostle Paul's testimony: ‘Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews: and how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord

Jesus Christ.’ The eloquent Paul, to whom God manifested himself in a remarkable manner, went from house to house, with all humility of mind, and with many tears and temptations.

“I have been shown that the most precious ministry can be done by canvassing, and that by ministers. By doing this work, they will obtain a varied experience, and will be doing the very work that the apostle Paul did. I copy an extract from an appeal made to our brethren in regard to canvassing for our periodicals and books: ‘The canvassing work is an important field for labor; and the intelligent, God-fearing, truth-loving canvasser, occupies a position equal to that of the gospel minister.’ Then should the canvasser feel at liberty, any more than the ordained minister, to act from selfish motives? Should he be unfaithful to all the principles of missionary work, and sell only those books that are cheapest and easiest to handle, neglecting to place before the people the books which will give most light, because by so doing, he can earn more money for himself? The canvassing work is a missionary work, and the field must be worked from a missionary standpoint. Selfish principles, love of dignity and position should not be once named among us. The thought of seeking to become greatest should never come into our minds.”

WE have many books which contain precious truths for this time. They are lying on the shelves of the tract societies and publishing houses. Is it my duty to assist in their circulation? is a question that should be carefully and prayerfully considered by each individual.

To the unemployed we would say: Take hold of the canvassing work upon the plan advocated in this paper. There is room enough in the United States and Canada alone for more than five thousand agents, at wages that will provide a plain, comfortable living for an average family.

WELL organized work must be done in the church, that its members may understand the manner in which they may impart light to others, and thus strengthen their own faith and increase their knowledge.

E. G. W.

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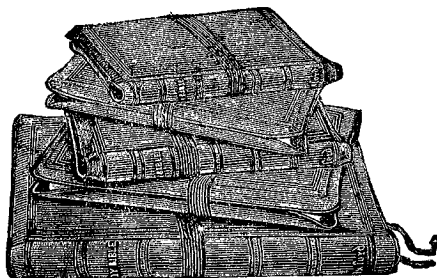
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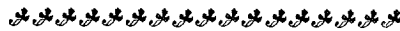
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