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Vol. XVI.

APRIL, 1889.

No. 4.

EVANGELISTIC WORK.

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You ask me for an article on evangelistic work. After my long Report to Synod on that subject, I ought to say but little. I believe in short Articles and short reports. Only once did I ever give members of Synod a right to complain of a long Report. That one was long because it seemed to be called for. I am convinced that our Church is verily guilty in that she has allowed the bearing of testimony before our own people too much to thrust aside the preaching of the simple gospel to the perishing at our door.

There are subjects, however, that connect themselves with, and grow out of evangelistic work, that I would like to discuss if I could do so, and could compass the discussion in a short letter. Suffer a few words on two of the subjects that have led to sharp controversy.

As to the manner of receiving new converts into the Church, while I might fault a sentence or two of your paper before N. Y. Presbytery, I agree with the entire spirit of your paper. Unless your words mean more than I can find in them our faith and practice in Slippery Rock agree with yours. We have received into the Church persons who were not thoroughly instructed in all our principles. In such cases we find out beforehand if such persons are desirous of making a profession. By appointment I then meet with them and endeavor to ascertain their intelligence, piety, motives, etc. Giving them a copy of the Testimony and Covenant I go over the whole testimony by chapters in summary, dwelling on distinctive points, and giving needed instruction as far as possible. In this way they are prepared for the examination by the Session. I know that a similar course was pursued by the elders in a vacant city congregation. Our distinctive principles can be presented in a short time, and fairly presented to an earnest convert will almost invariably be accepted. Where there is

determined opposition to any of our Distinctive principles or practices in a candidate, we advise him to connect with some other Church. I have done this without offense. Our meetings here have been instrumental in adding to the membership of other Churches. We rejoice in this.

A great mistake very generally made by our officers and people is that of supposing that our work is done, when a convert has been received into the Church. It is in truth only begun. Many converts are afterwards lost to the Church by neglect to follow them up with instruction, counsel, warning, and encouragement. Verily in this respect "we are guilty concerning our brother." A child must not be left to shift for itself the moment it is born into the family, nor yet when it is able to stand or walk alone.

Of course the rule is that our principles and practices must be guarded by discipline. But the rod must be kindly and wisely adapted to each case. With new converts, Sessions ought to deal gently, at least till determined opposition develops. As to the Colorado case of discipline, I was never satisfied with the result of it; yet as it came before Synod, there seemed to be no way to reach a different result, except to arraign the Kansas Presbytery. And yet I do believe that the discussion of that case has done more harm than the case itself. I hope it will no longer be used as a club to break somebody's head. Let it be laid away on the shelf of our ecclesiastical museum as a curiosity or relic.

As to the matter of Church Unity, it is cause of rejoicing that we are attempting to grapple that knotty question. Our Church is the right place for the discussion and movement to originate. No doubt mistakes will be made in our first attempts to find the path of duty. I have been interested and I trust profited by the plans and discussions. While I am not ready to adopt all your positions, I do not for a moment think you have any designs of disloyalty to our Testimony. It grieves me to see the spirit of mistrust that has been shown. A little more charity would have seemed better. The way to Church Union without unfaithfulness does not yet appear to me. We can only wait for the light and guidance which the outpouring of the Holy Spirit will bring. The time of promise must be near; the Lord hasten it. In the meantime we have a great work for Christ and for a dying world to do.

And now that I have given both sides a gentle tap, allow me to suggest that controversialism and personalities be laid aside, and that truth and duty be the only theme for earnest and charitable discussion. Our magazines have better work to do than ha tening premature baldness.