

ESSENTIALS OF CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR.

BY W. T. ELLIS.

THE first essential is the pledge—the full pledge that binds us to church loyalty, as well as to daily prayer and Bible reading and participation in the weekly Endeavor meeting. This is the chief distinguishing characteristic of the movement. It is not an easy pledge; in truth, it is a very hard pledge. To sign it in sincerity and to fulfill it with fidelity insures a transformed life. A more binding or comprehensive covenant can scarcely be imagined. It touches all of life. To keep the pledge is to become of a certainty a reverent, faithful, consecrated disciple of Jesus Christ.

We have no right to make light of the pledge. Look-out committees do wrong when they minimize its importance in dealing with applicants for membership. The full force, significance and solemnity of its strong phases should be felt by every young person who appends his name to this vow.

Next to the pledge, the system of committees is most characteristic of Christian Endeavor. Look-out, prayer-meeting, and social committees are to be found in every true society. They represent the idea of service by the young people. Christian Endeavor is not organized merely for instruction; it does more than tell young people to serve Christ. It sets them to doing it. Every endeavorer should be a member of some committee that he may secure training in the practice of Christian work. The committees represent work for the church, work for one another, work for the Society, and work for souls. Through their medium young disciples become skilled in planning and executing tasks for the Master. The number of committees in a society should be as great as the work to be done requires, but superfluous committees are always a drawback.

A weekly prayer-meeting, with participation by every member, is still another essential of Christian Endeavor. This is a religious organization. Its chief aims are spiritual. It is not a social endeavor society, or a debating club, or a literary society, or a mutual improvement society. These ends it may accomplish incidentally, but before all else its aims are spiritual. The emphasis is not upon "Endeavor," but upon "Christian." The formation of the first society was a proposition that things unseen and eternal are attractive and natural for young men and young women. To the world it said that young people do not want entertainment so much as they want work, purpose and responsibility. Moreover, it was a declaration that genu-

ine religion is a proper and most important part of every full young life, and that a young man or a young woman is not his or her best self until Jesus Christ has been accepted as Saviour and Master.

One feature of Christian Endeavor that critics declared would produce prig and hypocrites was the monthly conference or experience meeting, wherein the members are expected to offer some personal testimony or word of reedification. This monthly meeting is one of the peculiarities of Christian Endeavor, and one of its essentials. It has not fostered an unnatural type of religion, but where it has been kept from becoming a mechanical thing it has helped, inestimably, to produce a rich, faithful,

Art," commencing with "Diana or Christ," followed by "The Last Supper," "The Shadow of the Cross," etc. Mr. Salton is particularly well qualified to deal with subjects of this kind, having been an art teacher in the old land, and having given special attention to art studies for a number of years. His method is to have the picture which he has chosen as his topic, printed on a small card which is given to every member of the congregation. With the picture in the hands of the people, he proceeds to point out the leading features of the painting, and then deals with the practical lessons to be learned from it. After the service is over, it is almost impossible to find one of the picture cards in the pews, for the people have carried them home. In most cases they are carefully preserved and talked about, and thus the sermon is preached over many times and indelibly impressed.

The picture for a recent Sunday evening was "Calvary," by the Hungarian artist Munkacsy, which we reproduce in this paper. Mr. Salton pointed out that this was a picture of contrasts; the loving group around the Saviour's cross contrasting strongly with the adjoining cross surrounded by no mourning ones. The devotion of Christ's friends and the hate of His enemies are also strikingly portrayed. The painting was a picture of life to him who sees the loving kindness of a loving Father's heart and bows before it, but death to him who turns from it and strives after worldly things.

Of course these sermons have been criticised. Some have spoken of them as "art entertainments," while others think that Mr. Salton ought to "preach the Gospel." Those who hear him regularly say that he does preach the Gospel in the most powerful manner. Nearly all the pictures represent some scene in the life of Christ, and afford the opportunity of presenting the Gospel story in a striking way. Is it not strange that, whenever any new method is introduced, there is always somebody ready to declare that "it is not the Gospel"? Is it not also peculiar, that preachers, for so many years, have been hammering away at people's ears, and utterly neglecting to get the truth through "eye-gate"? During recent times we have begun to recognize the fact that appeals to the heart through the eye are even more impressive than when addressed to the ear, and when both eye and ear are enlisted the perfection of attention is secured.

The probabilities are, that in the twentieth century sermon, picture illustrations will be so common that no preacher who uses them will be in danger of being charged with neglecting to preach the Gospel.



REV. G. F. SALTON, PH.D.
PASTOR CENTENARY CHURCH, HAMILTON

and consecrated life in the young Christian.

THE PICTURE SERMON.

WE have all heard of "sermons in stones," and illustrations from "running brooks." Nature is one great mirror of God's benevolence, wisdom and skill, and we cannot study it without being drawn nearer to the Creator. While it may be true, as we settled long ago in the debating society, that the works of nature are more wonderful than the works of man, may there not also be much for us to learn from the inviting field of art? Rev. G. F. Salton, pastor of the Centenary Church, Hamilton, takes this view, and for some time has been putting it into practice. During a number of Sunday evenings he has been preaching sermons on "Masterpieces of