

## Practical Plans.

### The District League Convention.

BY REV. W. D. SMITH, B.A.

The time of the year is approaching when many Executive Committees will be meeting to plan for the District Convention. Is the routine plan to be adopted again which has been followed with little change for years? Why not make our conventions mean something? Why not plan them so that they will accomplish something definite which will be of permanent value to all present and through these, to the Leagues and churches represented, and thus to the great work of bringing in the kingdom of God?

I would suggest in the first place, that in planning our Convention programme, we aim primarily at certain definite results, and secondly, that persons be selected to take charge who are known to be capable, and who are practically carrying out in their work what they teach at Conventions. The great mistake made at many of our Conventions is the attempt to do too much, and in too short a time. Too many subjects are assigned, too many papers are read, or speeches made, and in very many instances by people who are far from capable, or who if capable of presenting a good thing are known to be lax in putting their theory into practice.

Let us aim at two or three important objects and let us assign the work to those who are particularly qualified to accomplish it, even if they must be brought from a distance, which will seldom be necessary. The other members of the Convention will be constituted a school and receive help in methods, information, and inspiration which will be of permanent value, and which few, if any, would be capable of imparting themselves.

But there is a work which may be assigned to those who are not specialists in any department. The life of some great Christian worker may be sketched, or some part of the history of our own Church, or the books of the Reading Course and others may be reviewed. By this means, not only is the subject in hand brought before the Convention and the members interested in it, but the writer has been compelled to do much reading and which otherwise would not have been accomplished.

In order to do this sufficient time must be allowed. No Convention should be of less than two days' duration. An hour each day or, better still, an hour each session should be given each leader in the special studies taken up, and the remainder of the time devoted to the subordinate work, social intercourse and recreation. Of course such a meeting will be deeply spiritual and pervaded by the presence and power of God. It will bring such a benediction to the Church, the community and the homes which it touches,

that the people who entertain the delegates will consider their inconvenience nothing, but will rather be sorry when the end comes.

By putting "the school idea" into our District Epworth League Convention, and following, for two days at least, a course of study in some part of the Word of God, Missionary work, Evangelistic work, or Literary instruction, together with book reviews and sketches on important subjects, and a conference or two on methods, our Convention will become an institution of real and permanent value to all who are thoroughly in earnest. It will be no place for those who merely purpose to "take a day and have a nice time." It will mean business. It will mean work and demand sacrifice. But when these annual meetings are made "worth the while," when they become places where valuable instruction and important information is imparted by capable leaders and teachers, and where the presence and power of God is manifest, they will have little interest for those who desire only "a good time," but will be too valuable to be missed by the leaders and workers in our many Leagues even though it means sacrifice to attend.

Fonthill, Ont.

### About League Finances.

Do not have a fee for admission to membership to the Epworth League. Some may be kept out by it.

Always take up a collection when you have a public mass meeting.

The expenses of the League may be met by monthly contributions from the members, collected by the Treasurer.

See that every member who is in a position to do so, is asked to contribute to the support of the Church through the regular channels.

Do not educate the League to depend upon suppers and entertainments for its funds.

**A Good Rule.**—A fourth vice-president says that she will have nothing to do with any social diversion which is silly. Her rule is good. Silliness is next to sinfulness.

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**A Word from the Founder.**—From John Wesley's *Letters to Young Women* we take a suggestion for those who find it hard to speak in prayer-meeting: "In order to speak for God, you must not confer with flesh and blood, or you will never begin. You should vehemently resist the reasoning of the devil, who will never want arguments for your silence. . . . The simple, childlike boldness of faith is peculiarly necessary, and when you have once broken through and made the beginning, then prudence has its office—that is, Christian (not worldly) prudence."

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**Pray Short.**—The situation is this: If but a few lengthy prayers are offered, and if these brethren pray each week, then others who ought to participate are

permanently shut out. We have a suspicion that "sentence prayers," as they are called, have been somewhat overdone. Many people find it impossible to compress a well-rounded thought into a sentence; neither is it necessary, if due brevity is observed. The best meetings, however, are those where a dozen or more voices are heard in succession and the tide of emotion and devotion rises to a crest wave.—*Central Christian Advocate.*

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**Ask Questions.**—We dropped into a devotional meeting and heard the leader put such questions to those present that all felt they wanted to speak. They nearly all did speak. The hour went by, some speaking twice and apologizing for so doing, but giving as their reason that the questions asked were of such a character they wanted to give their experience. One question was, "What has the League done for you?" Another was, "How would you improve the devotional meetings?" Here is the secret of leading a meeting. Put a simple question to those present—something all can comprehend, and something all can give some form of reply to. Get people's mouths open at the beginning of a meeting, and you have them for that service.—*Epworth Herald.*

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**Those Committees.**—All our League operations ought to move on the basis of something for everybody to do, and every fellow at it. There is an ill-founded dread abroad in Leaguedom that a committee can be overly crowded. "What's everybody's business is nobody's business" has but little application here. Let the pastor, president, and vice-presidents take the roll and see to it that every member has some specific duty. You are not overly crowded with committees so long as some one has nothing to do. An idle Leaguer is a dangerous quantity in any League. Let there be five, seven, nine, or thirteen on each committee, and do not be afraid of getting too many on a committee. You can remove every form of danger by compact organization.—*J. Marvin Nicholls.*

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**Too Much Talk.**—These wise words are from Bishop Vincent: "I should avoid too much public talk by children. It may do them great harm. The better they can do it, the more likely is *self* to be strengthened. A simple confession before the church, with as few words as possible, may be enough. I should put little groups of children under the care of wise leaders, who should pack their memories with the Word of God, especially His promises, and with the best hymns of the Church, and with strong doctrinal definitions of catechism and creed. I should visit the parents and secure their sympathy and help in this work of looking after the children, insisting on family prayer, distributing good tracts, often meeting the children for little talks on the Church and on the duties of children in home-life, school-life, shop-life, church-life. I should seek to make religion a steady force of character and of conduct."