

The Epworth League as an Evangelistic Force

BY MISS ETHEL HARE

Let us first consider the object of the League. In our Constitution we read that its object first is to save souls; second, to promote an earnest, intelligent and practical life in the young members and friends of the church; third, to assist them in the study of God's Word; and fourth, to increase their usefulness in the service of God and humanity. True Epworth Leaguers must be consecrated Christians, seeking others who do not know the blessings of salvation. We must be drilled soldiers for Christ, but must not be satisfied with merely "holding the fort," but should march forth to conquest. The kingdom of Christ must be extended at home and abroad.

The first Christian Endeavor League had eleven members. For parts of three years they were associate members. When associate membership was no longer possible they became active members, but hesitated before entering upon the work. The Chairman of the Look-out Committee, Simon Peter, remembers that he had in a fit of temper cut a man's ear off; he remembers, too, that at a crucial time he denied his Master, even with cursing. Another of them, named John, whom almost everyone speaks of as a most loving person, remembers how in his indignation he would have called down fire from heaven to consume a whole Samaritan town. Still another of them, named Thomas, remembers how he refused to believe the testimony of the other ten and the shame which his littleness of faith caused. And as they look backward, they see how ill-prepared they were for the great work they had undertaken and how impossible it will be for them, unless additional strength and grace be given, to fulfill the pledge of activity which they have given to their great Head and Founder.

A TEN DAYS' PRAYER-MEETING.

Though the constitution of that society has not yet been written, they have received certain verbal instructions, and these they follow to the letter. Their great Founder and Teacher has told them to tarry in Jerusalem until they be endued with power. And so this first Christian Endeavor League has as its inaugural a ten-days' prayer meeting. At the end of that time the Chairman of the Look-out Committee preached and three thousand persons sought admission to the League as active members. From that time to the present history has been repeating itself. Prayer and revival follow each other as cause and effect. Is our own beloved Methodism not the revival following those Oxford prayer meetings? At the present day we need revivals in our Epworth Leagues to realize their high destinies, and the League should pray if they expect to have a revival.

But someone is ready to say, we pray in our League and we have never developed a revival. How many here remember what they prayed for the last time they attended their own local League? We often pray to be baptized with power from on high and with the Holy Ghost and with fire. Do we expect to have such prayers answered? Are we desirous to have them answered? Are we ready to live as the apostles lived, work as the apostles worked, and die as the apostles died? The first great need

of our Leagues before a revival is possible is *honesty*. God is ready and willing and anxious to baptize us with the Holy Ghost. Are we ready to use the baptism?

THE CHIEF END OF MAN.

Let us ask ourselves that old question, "What is the chief end of man?" You know the answer, "To glorify God and to enjoy Him forever." Do all our active members possess this idea of life? Too often we find Christianity simply tacked on as a matter of secondary importance. If we would have a revival we must be true to our obligation. Take the first words of the pledge: "Taking Christ as my example." Oh, what words! What do they mean? To be poor, not rich; to do not our own will but God's will; to associate not with refined and cultivated and morally pure, but with the coarse, the unlearned and the impure; to live not in ease and freedom from care, but in toil and feeling the need of souls; to pray as the few simple words morning and evening, but with Gethsemane experience. Oh, with what levity apparently we take that solemn obligation!

If we would carefully and prayerfully analyze the obligation we have taken, study it until we know what it means, then honestly try to fulfil that obligation, nothing on earth and nothing in hell could prevent a revival.

INDIVIDUAL CONSECRATION.

If the revival is in the League, then the League will win souls in their revival. If the members of the League are saved, sanctified and consecrated to the Lord for service, then they are ready to serve in any place and in every way that their Commander directs. Let there be individual consecration and individual work done in behalf of the individual. This will develop strong Leaguers, and hence the salvation of many souls. And nothing less than this will do. We owe it to our unsaved fellowmen, to ourselves and to God. Our individual responsibility to God for the proper exercise of all our talents in the work of soul-saving ought to be a continuous incentive to duty. When Daniel Webster was asked what was the gravest thought that ever occupied his mind, he replied, "My personal responsibility to God." But there is another, shall I say, stronger, incentive to duty than this. It was what moved him to sacrifice all in behalf of "the love of Christ constraineth me." When D. L. Moody was asked, "How may we reach the masses?" he gave the laconic reply, "Go for them." Dr. James Stalker says: "I believe that almost any preacher would confess that his great mission has been the neglect of individuals, and henceforth I will write 'individuals' on my heart as the watchword of my ministry."

CHRIST DISCOVERED THE INDIVIDUAL.

Our Lord, who is pre-eminently our example, sought individuals in His ministry. Indeed, it was He who "discovered the individual." He ever recognized and magnified man's individuality and personality. John, James, Matthew, Andrew, Peter and all the other apostles were individuals called to be His disciples by His personal appeal, "Follow Me." Mary Magdalene, Zaccheus, Nicodemus, and the woman of Samaria, were won in this way. Many of His finest sayings were uttered to the individual. Philip was directed to the south that he might lead a man to Christ. We attempt to reach many and really save none. If we select one, and then concentrate all our powers upon that one, with God's blessing, we shall not labor in vain.

"ALL NATIONS."

But Christ has given us a great commission, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe whatsoever things I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." With the same infinite love which sought and saved us, He longs for the salvation of every soul in every land, so let each endeavor be for His sake, not only that people in China and Japan, etc., may be rescued from degradation and heathenism, but that the dear loving Saviour may see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied. Too many think that our work is all at home. The early Christians, after the ascension of Christ, did not say, "We need go no further," and stay in the capital city; but when persecution came and scattered them abroad, they went preaching the Word. We may become too anxious to feed the people here, to cater to their tastes by fancy churches, attractive and spicy services, while people farther off cry for bread. Many are dying for want of help. They have not even the plain bread of the Gospel, while we at home feed on all possible dainties. It is our work and privilege to go out and labor until all know the Gospel. Stanley, in his great march through Africa, travelled some 7,000 miles in 999 days, and he saw not a soul during that time of the natives who had heard of Christ. Is this to go on? Let us do what is in our power to evangelize the race and Christ will go with us if we carry abroad the glorious standard of the Cross. No doubt many of the Leaguers now will offer themselves as missionaries when they receive the personal command. But if more could realize its full meaning there would be a heartier support of those missionaries now in the field, in our offerings and our prayers. Show a living Christ to the world as the only power to save in this twentieth century. We need men, not means. We are willing to do our share in telling Christ to the world.

Forward, Epworth Leaguers,
Quit yourselves like men!
Wielding Gospel weapons,

Force the fight again;
Summon strength and daring,
Confident and free,
Rouse to splendid action,
Fervid loyalty.

What are toils or dangers,
Marches, wounds or pain?
Christ is near His triumph;
You with Him shall reign.

Aylmer, Ont.

Each of you possesses a special fitness for your own special work, and no one in the universe can take your place, or do the work allotted to you.—Hugh Macmillan.