

Devotional Service

BY REV. T. J. PARR, M.A.

JANUARY 18.—"LEAGUERS IN TRAINING FOR CHURCH WORK"

Acts 2, 17, 18; Prov. 2, 1-8; Mark 1, 16-20.

HOME READINGS.

Mon., Jan. 12, Through testimony..... John 8, 8-17
Tues., Jan. 13, Through prayer..... Matt. 7, 7-12
Wed., Jan. 14, Through Bible study..... Rom. 3, 14-17
Thurs., Jan. 15, Through prayer..... 1 Cor. 12, 1-11
Fri., Jan. 16, Through service..... 2 Tim. 12, 9-13
Sat., Jan. 17, Through obedience..... 1 Pet. 5, 5-7

Church work—Epworth Leaguer, the one is intended for the other. You find the Epworth Leaguer that engages in no church work, and takes no interest in church enterprises, and you find a dead Leaguer, dead to the main purposes for which it is organized. A muscle that makes no movement soon withers; a pond that stands still becomes stagnant; a brain that does no thinking becomes incapable of thought—a Leaguer that engages in no church work speedily expires.

TRAINING NECESSARY.

To do church work effectively requires training. Any art presupposes knowledge and its application. And the art of looking up and lifting up for Christ and the Church—the central idea of the Epworth Leaguer—implies an equipment of head and heart and hand commensurate with the great work undertaken. The art of watch-repairing demands an apprenticeship of some years, years of study and application, before the apprentice becomes a master-hand to be entrusted without oversight with the repairing of expensive watches. Soul-winning and soul-building and church-advancement is an art that no one should attempt without serving an apprenticeship. The church worker must go to school to the Divine Master, must learn of Him, and in that seminary of wisdom takes his first lessons, and lays the foundations for Christian endeavor. The immortal soul is too valuable, and endures too long to be tampered with by the untrained and inexperienced.

WHERE OBTAINED.

Where shall the Leaguer serve his apprenticeship for church work? How may his training be obtained?

1. By the bestowment of the Spirit. (Acts 2: 17, 18.) Young people must learn to put first things first. Church work is the Spirit's work, and to do that work we must have the Spirit's presence. It is so easy to substitute other things for this great essential. Human nature is so much like to feel that it is self-sufficient. Man likes to persuade himself that he has power in himself. But the humbling fact is simply this, we cannot do God's work except in God's way. And here is God's way. "And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out of my Spirit." Epworth Leaguers must first obtain the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and then seek constantly the guidance of that Spirit in all Christian activity.

2. By the forming of high ideals. The second part of the Leaguer's training for church work is forming and cherishing high ideals. "Your young men shall see visions." No one rises higher than his ideals. Indeed, a man's life is the perfection of his visions. The architect of St. Paul's, the London—Sir Christopher Wren—a structure whose fame is still world-wide, saw a vision of his great creation before it assumed material form. Christian young people must see divine visions of what they may be under the

spirit and discipline of Christ, what they may do in the establishment of his kingdom through his church by his teaching and direction, what they may accomplish as ambassadors for Christ, building the eternal structure whose architectural ideal came from heaven, the church of the living God.

3. By learning the message. The ultimate aim of church work is to declare the message of Christ by word and by deed the words of the heart, the deeds of the life. Whatever work in the church one seeks to do, in the last analysis the object is to lead to Christ, to build up in Christ. Keep that before you, young people! But where can you secure the message? In the memorable words of Christ we are told, "Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men." (Mark 2: 17.) Let Christ—catch his spirit—learn his truth—be first with his ideals—know, definitely know, his teachings, and then deliver his message. Deliver his message, first by living it yourself. You are to be explicit and known of all men.

4. By taking time and pains. When Simon and Andrew were called to follow Jesus, they forsook their nets straightway and followed him. (Mark 1: 18.) These men sacrificed something to serve Christ. They took time, exercised pains to be faithful to their new Master. Many young Christians scarcely know what it is to sacrifice anything for their religion, and many put it the other way, and think that religion and the church must sacrifice for them. They must be accommodated, they must be entertained, they must be catered to; they are the important parties! All this is contrary to the spirit and teachings of Christ, and leaguers in training for church work must learn to set aside such notions, and come to the conclusion that if they are to serve Christ and the Church, they must be willing to spend time, make sacrifice, abandon pleasure and pleasure, and honor life. (Mark 1: 20) to take a useful part in the most stimulating, satisfying, and glorious work that can engage the attention of men.

5. By knowing and using the best methods. In training for work of the church, leaguers should not learn to use old tools, and antiquated methods. The world is moving on. This is the twentieth century. Be abreast with the times. The Church of God must not be behind one pace in the procession forward through the gates of this new century. Truth never changes. It is eternal and eternally the same. But ways of presenting the truth, and ways of getting men to accept the truth, and means of securing church prosperity, all may change; and they are changing. The farmer who cuts his grain with a sickle when he can get a self-binder is a foolish man. Leaguers, know and use the best, most approved methods of doing work for Christ. At Conventions, in your Leaguer paper, The Epworth Era, in books multiplying year by year, in these exposition columns, you may become possessed with the most effective plans for doing your important work. The good is ever the enemy of the best. Don't be satisfied with the good, but find with ever-increasing holy ambition, the best. Notice how this is emphasized in the topic Scripture. (Prov. 2: 3, 5.)

POINTS FOR THE PRESIDENT.

In the foregoing exposition there are given five essentials in the training of leaguers for church work. It would make a very interesting evening to select five members each to take one essential and develop it by other thoughts and Scripture references a week in advance, and then present at the next meeting. The President might take as his part, Prayer, as an essential factor in church work, taking our Saviour's practice as an example. Don't overlook this.

JANUARY 25.—"MISSIONARY MEETING: WHAT IS MEANT BY THE EVANGELIZATION OF THE WORLD?"

Mark 16: 15; Luke 24, 47; Acts 1, 8.

HOME READINGS.

Mon., Jan. 19, Christ died for all..... Rom. 5, 17-21
Tues., Jan. 20, Heart and soul..... 1 Cor. 10, 11-15
Wed., Jan. 21, The fruitful word..... 1 Pet. 2, 1-12
Thurs., Jan. 22, Some early missionaries..... Acts 13, 1-3
Fri., Jan. 23, Missionary prayer..... 1 Cor. 12, 1-11
Sat., Jan. 24, Missions and prayer..... 2 Cor. 6, 2-9

Disciples of Christ are entrusted with an important commission. It is no less than the propagation of the Gospel throughout the world. No less than the attempt to present the glad tidings of salvation to every person on earth. How forceful does this become when we read the order as originally given by the Saviour himself: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature," as recorded in Mark's gospel (Mark 16: 15); or as reported by Luke in his narrative, "And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations;" or in the Saviour's last recorded words as given in the Acts, "Ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth." There can be no doubt as to the meaning of these injunctions, although the words have been misunderstood and neglected. They mean that every living disciple of Christ must do his part to send the gospel to every living man who is without it. This he must do either by taking the Gospel message himself, or by sending some one else with it, until all men have had an adequate opportunity to know Jesus Christ as their Saviour, and to become his redeemed disciples. In a nutshell, this is what is meant by the evangelization of the world.

THE PLAN.

For nine meetings this year, this subject of the evangelization of the world is to be studied, one topic each month. John R. Mott's book, "The Evangelization of the World in this Generation," is to be the subject of study. It will be well for as many young people as possible to secure the book and study it carefully. But as many readers of this paper will not have the book, we propose to give a brief, pointed resume of each chapter as it appears for consideration.

EVANGELIZATION OF THE WORLD IN THIS GENERATION—WHAT IT MEANS.

1. Where it arose. To begin with, this phrase is the watchword of the Students' Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions, organized in 1886, and since taken form in all Protestant countries. The idea involved in the phrase has taken strong hold on a multitude of men and women. Eminent leaders of the various branches of the Church of Christ have endorsed the Watchword and have urged its adoption by all Christians as expressive of an inspiring ideal as well as of a primary and urgent duty.

2. The Watchword. This watchword means to give all men an adequate opportunity to know Jesus Christ as their Saviour, and to become his real disciples. It involves, first, a distribution of missionary agencies as will make the knowledge of the Gospel accessible to all men. It means to preach the Gospel to every creature according to Christ's great commission. That the Christian worker by voice and by life, and by printed page, in season and out of season, will seek to set forth those facts about Christ which in all lands have been found to be the power of God unto the salvation of every man that believes.

3. To living men. The living men, if the Gospel is to be preached to all men it must be done while they are living. The watchword therefore means the