

sure the desired punctuality. The counsel of Susannah Wesley to her son Samuel, written in 1709 when he was at Oxford, might be profitably followed by the vast majority of our young people to-day. She advised, "My son, you must remember that life is our Divine gift,—it is the talent given us by our Father in Heaven. I request that you throw the business of your life into a certain method and thus save the friction of making each day anew. Arise early, go to bed at a certain hour, eat at stated times, pray, read, and study by a method, and so get the most out of the moments as they swiftly pass never to return." Little wonder that the Wesleys were punctual in the discharge of their multiplied activities in adult life, and might be confidently relied on in keeping their appointments. By a similar wise employment of time, by strict adherence to the underlying principle of honesty, by studied observance of the rights of others, modern Methodists might more nearly emulate their early founders and fathers in being punctual.

Epworth League Essentials

The years pass quickly. Many of us can easily remember the occasion of that historic meeting in Cleveland, when the Epworth League came into being. But most of our readers cannot recall the time when the Epworth League was not a familiar name and a well-known society. To the large majority of our young people it has been as intimately associated in their thought with church work as the Sunday School or the mid-week prayer meeting. They are therefore, incapable of reviewing its record or of estimating its relative value in comparison with the various forms of young people's societies existing in ante-league days. Nor is it our present intention to quote figures or adduce argument to show the progress of the league. That it has filled a necessary place in the church with at least some measure of success, no one will deny. That it has accomplished all it might have done no one claims, any more than he would maintain that the pulpit has performed its whole duty, the Sunday School fulfilled its entire mission, or any other of the church organizations accomplished all it was designed to do. We have thought that sometimes a more strict account has been exacted from our Epworth Leagues than from other forms of church enterprise. We are not apologizing for the League, for there is no need. We would not magnify its successes any more than we would minify its failures. It has had both. For the former we give thanks, the repetition of the latter we would if possible prevent.

The immediate aim of the Epworth League is of course the advancement of the League. But, the organized society, either in its local or connexional sense, is not an end in itself. At the best it is only a means to an end. The end is two-fold, inasmuch as it seeks the establishment of Christ's Kingdom in our youth, and then the extension of Christ's Kingdom by our youth. In our judgment the first is essential to the second.

The church's first duty to the young people is to bring them into right relation to Christ, and then to set them to work for Him. As the Lord Himself based all right relationship and acceptable service on personal affection, the church must reach the heart of the young for Christ and then enlist and direct all their service for His Kingdom. Activity is always good, but it is never at its best unless it is prompted by a loving heart, and is the manifestation and proof of personal allegiance that binds the doer in living loyalty to Christ. We would have the League give more attention to this vital matter of evangelism, that it may multiply the number of active evangelists employed in the propagation of the Gospel throughout the whole world.

With a right heart towards Christ, the youth must be established in the faith, and no uncertainty must be permitted to weaken their position. They must know and know why they know. And this knowledge must find expression in testimony. Two things we, as Methodists, must insist on:—an experience and a testimony. What is Methodism without both?

Whether or not our young people are to be converted after the fashion of their fathers, or are to be held to class-meeting forms of speech as in a generation gone, are not the most im-

portant matters. However they received Him, they must know that they have the Saviour. However they bear witness for Him, they must let others know of their personal possession. It is not any stated form of conversion, but the fact of it that we stand for. It is not any prescribed manner of utterance, but the necessity of speech that we emphasize.

And we rejoice that the Epworth League has cultivated both experience and testimony. And the fruit has been seen in manifest and manifold activities. Read the testimonies given at the recent Bay of Quinte Conference Convention as reported on a succeeding page if you have any doubts of these statements.

But not what has been done, but what is before us is of the utmost importance. What is needed? Several things we would suggest:

1. A deeper sense of the importance of young people's work on the part of the whole church. This will come if—

2. A higher value is placed on the young life of our congregations, not only for its future possibilities, but for its present worth.

3. The maintenance of a wise and aggressive administration, both in the general policy of the church and the local congregation regarding organized young people's activities.

4. A connexional unity that will bind our whole denomination together from ocean to ocean, so that while local methods may vary, one aim, one purpose, one great vital principle may everywhere prevail.

5. Better pastoral oversight. Ministers must get nearer to their young people and afford them what they have a right to expect, wise and loving leadership.

6. Leadership! No word better expresses our thought here. Visible human leadership, invisible divine leadership,—both are needed. The former can be obtained only by training, the latter is promised to all who will follow.

7. Oversight by sympathetic Quarterly Boards. The business of our Boards is too rushed, the temporalities of the church rather than the spiritual interests receive almost exclusive attention. The officials must study the problems of the young and sympathetically guide in solving them.

8. Loyalty to Christ. This is the supreme element. All work that does not spring from it is in a measure, selfish. "For Christ and the Church" must be the rallying cry, and personal adherence to our Lord's call our one predominant motive in service.

Other ways and means than now exist, the General Conference may, in its wisdom, devise for the perfecting of our organization or the broadening of the plans and methods of the Epworth League, but these eight essentials in our judgment will always remain and be obligatory upon us in the furtherance of our young people's work.

For Timid Speakers

It may be some comfort to our young and inexperienced leaguers who shrink from prominence in any public capacity, to know that the first efforts of some of the most illustrious workers for God were anything but a success. This was strongly impressed on our mind recently when reading the "Personal Life of David Livingstone," a volume of Missionary biography which is of superior excellence and profit. One of the recollections therein recorded concerning the youthful aspirant for mission fields is—"One part of our duties was to prepare sermons, which were submitted to Mr. Ceell, and, when corrected, were committed to memory, and then repeated to our village congregations. Livingstone prepared one, and one Sunday the minister of Stanford Rivers, where the celebrated Isaac Taylor resided, having fallen sick after the morning service, Livingstone was sent for to preach in the evening. He took his text, read it out very deliberately, and then—then—his sermon had fled! Midnight darkness came upon him, and he abruptly said: 'Friends, I have forgotten all I had to say,' and hurrying out of the pulpit he left the chapel." But his intrepid spirit persevered, and though he never became a great public speaker, he preached many an effective sermon and left a record of faithful service equalled by few and excelled by none. So, try again!

"There is no substitute for thorough-going, ardent, sincere earnestness."