

Practical Plans.

"How I Succeed in Keeping Up Interest in my Department."

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To gain one's active co-operation in any undertaking, it is necessary to first excite his interest, or awaken his curiosity, and secondly to retain that interest until the work is completed. A reader picks up a book, his curiosity being awakened by the title or perhaps by some illustration on the cover, and begins to read. If the author of that book succeeds in holding his attention, until he has read it through, the book is a success as far as that person is concerned. Exciting an interest is quite easy, but holding it is often very difficult.

At the outbreak of the Boer War, the interest of the world was deeply awakened. People of all ages, of all creeds, of all nationalities discussed every meagre war news, with intense interest. But after the taking of Pretoria, their interest began to decrease, and to-day very few are following the course of the war. To re-awaken the interest, something novel must be introduced.

One of the best ways to hold one's interest is to give him some part to take. The soldier is interested in the war, because of the personal responsibility devolving on himself. The shareholder is interested in his stock because his money is invested, and its success or failure affects him personally.

If you can succeed in getting your League members to take a part, invest their talents, in your League, you need never fear about its interest decreasing. The work cannot be successfully conducted by a few of the members. Interest may be excited for a time, but cannot be held long. Let us not say, "How can I keep up the interest," but "how can I get them to work," "what can I have them do?"

Personal work is a necessity to the full development of the Christian character. It may be very easy to live on a large income, without doing any work, but what does it accomplish in making you a man. To become a business man, you must acquire a business education, not alone by study, but by personal work. To become an athlete, you must exercise your muscles, as well as study the instructor's lecture. Theory without practice is of very little value.

To awaken interest in the League, the programmes every evening must be made attractive as the author makes his book, and to hold the interest awakened, the individual members must enter into personal work.

Under my department are two committees, viz., Prayer-meeting or Evangelistic and the Look Out. At the beginning of our League year, after the officers and their committees had been appointed, our programme for the year was made out and printed. We tried to have every member's name appear on the card in

some form or other. This seems to create greater interest, the members feeling as if they are a part of the League. We also tried to give as much variation as possible to the different evenings throughout the year. Many Leagues make a great mistake in having too much of a sameness night after night, some Leagues to my knowledge having gone so far as to read the topic from the Era. The topic may be well written, but it is not as beneficial as one written by yourself.

On every third night in the month the Literary and Social Committees consecutively provide the programme. Such evenings as Badge Social, Pronunciation Match on the proper names of the Bible, Autograph Social, Literary, The Man with the Hoe, Books. Question Match on the Gospels, etc., have been very successful in gaining attention. On such evenings we have a short paper on the League topic by a younger member of the League, the idea of this being to carry some spiritual influence, and at the same time initiating younger members into the work.

On Consecration night we endeavor to make the evening deeply spiritual. The leaders give very earnest discourses on the importance of a consecrated League. I have some difficulty in making the Roll Call a success. The associate and several of the active members respond by the word "Present," not by an experience or a text. This part of the service should be to the League as the class-meeting is to the Church.

On Christian Endeavor night the topic is taken up, after which we enter upon a prayer meeting. Difficulties are encountered in getting the younger members to lead. I have tried plans suggested in Era. I have asked several a week beforehand to lead in short prayer, but though they readily promised, they either absented themselves, or led in silent prayer. This important part of the service should not be allowed to go down without every effort being used to hold it; for such meetings are very important in the development of our spiritual life.

The work of our Look Out Committee is very successful. I was careful in placing a good convener at its head, and can always rely on the work being well done. New comers are looked after, and invited to the League. Absent members are seen, and kindly urged to be there next time. Every practical means are tried to make this work most productive. On Social evenings while young people are enjoying themselves, the committee is busy in adding new members to their list.

With young workers, words of encouragement should not be omitted. Too little appreciation is expressed. Older workers can look back upon times in their early active work when kind words of appreciation encouraged them. Always show an interest in the younger members' work. Help them in preparing their papers, if they feel timid. Give them every possible help, rather than allow them to withdraw their paper.

Active members are to a very great extent responsible for the spiritual atmosphere of the League. God works in and through us to will and to do. If our spiritual life is cold, the atmosphere of the League shall be cold. God waits consecrated lives to do His work.

Hints on Leading a Meeting.

1. Do not refuse when asked to lead. The devil may try to persuade you that this is modesty, but really it is one of the worst kinds of pride.

2. Make careful, faithful and prayerful preparation, as if all depended on yourself.

3. But remember that it is a service for Christ, and you have the promise of the Holy Spirit to help you both in preparing and in leading.

4. Do not pose as a leader, or be too assertive; but be the humble, responsive servant of the Holy Spirit.

5. Come ahead of time to adapt yourself to the conditions—getting in full sympathy with the place and people.

6. Secure lively and reverent singing, and begin promptly on time.

7. Besides your own preparation, say to a few persons that you will depend on them to take some part early in the meeting. The last part will take care of itself.

8. Usually make the opening prayer yourself. You are better fitted than any one else. Then this is an essential personal preparation as a leader.

9. Endeavor to command attention from the very start. Be firm in utterance, fresh in thought, animated in spirit, and thus you will immediately affect and infect the audience.

10. But do not get nervous over an occasional moment of silence. That kind of silence is often golden in spiritual results.

11. Have your own ideas, ideals, and methods, but be quick to accommodate yourself to any prescribed customs and to any unexpected emergency.

12. Having done your best, after the best preparation, believe that God will use or overrule all the best results.

Missionary Books.

Some additions to the missionary library may be found, perhaps, by a search through the unused books of the Sunday-school library. They have been little read because little known. Bring them to light, examine them, and put such as are available into the missionary library, which, of course, is to be well advertised and well circulated. We take it for granted that there will be the proper consultation with the Sunday-school officers in regard to such transfer of books.

Evening with Tennyson.

1. Devotional exercises.
2. Regular prayer-meeting topic.
3. Quartette, "Sweet and Low."
4. Paper, "Life of Tennyson."
5. Song, "Break on thy cold, gray stones, O Sea." Tennyson.
6. Gems from Tennyson, each member to read or recite, not more than eight lines.
7. Song, "The Brook." Tennyson.
8. Paper, "In Memoriam." Tennyson.
9. Quartette, "Blow, breezes blow." Tennyson.
10. Recitation, "Blaze of the light signal," or "The Revenge." Tennyson.
11. Song, "Crossing the Bar."