

The Revival of Christian Endeavor.

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That there has been a decline in the enthusiasm and zeal that once characterized Christian Endeavor in Canada, no one knowing the facts of the case will deny. Admitting this fact, what is to be done? Some are ready to say; abandon it altogether. Others are perplexed and puzzled, and are not prepared to venture a suggestion. Others are bolder, and advise that it be incorporated with some other department of Christian work. We must confess to agreeing with neither the one nor the other. Do we do either, with the Sunday School or even with the Church, when they pass through a period of deadness and decline? Moreover the Christian Endeavor Society is a part of the Church, and it is a proper question to ask whether it is not sharing the life of the Church; whether the real condition of the Church is not manifesting itself in it? It may be regarded as the thermometer that tells the spiritual warmth or the spiritual coldness of the Church. If the spiritual conditions are ranging high the Christian Endeavor Society will be well maintained, but if they are low, the Society will pine and perish. The Christian Endeavor Society is preeminently a spiritual Society.

It cannot long survive in unspiritual conditions. And there can be no doubt that that fact accounts for its disappearance in many cases. But it still subsists, even though it is not as vigorous, and aggressive, and large, numerically, as formerly. It needs reviving. Ten years have tried its strength and its staying power: ten years have shown its value as an educator of the young in Christian life and service: ten years have demonstrated its value as a thoroughly efficient part of our Church organization—in Canada. And knowing what we do of its excellence, we are not willing to dispense with it.

Rather, we would seek its retention and its restoration to its normal condition and power.

But, we are asked, how is that to be done? We may answer first *negatively*. (1) It is not to be done by changing its character. It is simply a young people's prayer meeting in which all are pledged to take some part: and if it is turned into a Bible class, there arises at once in its distinctions that are marked. Then we have the quick and the slow; the clever and the stupid; the well acquainted with the Bible and the ill acquainted with the Bible,—revealed. They become conspicuous by the class work. And there spring up feelings that ought to be by all means suppressed: feelings that do not promote unity and strength, but rather create division and weakness. (2) Nor is this to be done by changing it into a literary Society, or even by introducing the literary element into it in any marked measure so as to color its work and give it the complexion of a literary Society. Many a Christian Endeavor Society has been killed by this procedure. This is alien to its nature. It shows an entire misapprehension of its spirit. It is a meeting for prayer and strictly religious exercises, and it declines as soon as anything alien to these is introduced. Literature is good in its place, but the study of it should not be thought of in connection

with a young people's prayer meeting.

(3) Nor is this to be done by changing it into a Social club, or a Missionary society, or any other organization which has for its object something distinctly apart from spiritual development and edification. Anything that touches that is detrimental to its prosperity and even to its life.

What then, you ask, are we to do to revive it? We may very properly answer in the words of the Lord to the Church of Ephesus. "Remember from whence thou art fallen; and repent, and do the first works." "Thou hast left thy first love," return to it. Therein lies the secret of revival for our C. E. Societies. Instead of going forth into some new and untried ways—or rather, speaking more truly, into old and well tried ways, but not employed in connection with Christian Endeavor—ways which have failed again and again to hold the young people; we should return to the simplicity of the early days of Christian Endeavor when its life tide was full of throbbing pulses and glad hearts, and vigorous and aggressive activity; crowned with success and victory.

We should revert to its early ideal, which was its great strength: a prayer meeting in which all took some part; a training school where each encouraged the growth of the other, a service where short addresses, short passages of Scripture, short prayers were the order of the day. And where all were willing to be on an equality. If there is a return to this, revival will come at once. Some are ever troubled with the desire of progress, a very laudable desire in certain circumstances, but wholly out of place in Christian Endeavor, simply because it is getting away from the fountain of its life, and the springs of its exuberant joy. The experience of many an immensely ambitious Society proves that in its loss of power, and sometimes in its total extinction. We know Societies that have through ten years kept to the original idea of C. E. and have eschewed all tempting novelties, and have flourished through the burning heat of summer days, and the biting frosts of winter nights, and are still fresh and green as in the early days. These not only keep up their own meetings but work for outside objects. The weekly meetings are not the end for which the Society exists. They are only the means of education and development for service in many departments of Church activity. And to any one who thinks correctly about the matter, it will be clear that literary study or Bible class work, or social gatherings for a good time, are not in the highest way calculated to minister the motives necessary for the work the world needs. Life is the great requisite for service. A life sustained by the sense of brotherhood and fellowship. A life charged with spiritual forces, and a mighty faith in the living God. And that, the original form of Christian Endeavor imported. And because of this we are devoutly desirous of seeing it continued as a force in our Church life. Its revival will come by a return to its original idea and type.

There is no fretting, worrying, or over-anxiety when God has endowed a preacher to prophesy in His name.

Sparks From Other Anvils.

Presbyterian Banner: Quiet profound meditation on Scripture will do more to enrich and strengthen the soul in spiritual life than any quantity of superficial reading.

Christian Guardian: The human heart may seek shelter in human kind, but the highest refuge lies beyond the everlasting hills, where the footprints of men have never been seen.

United Presbyterian: When will the congregation become interested in the weekly prayer meeting? When the members of the Church as individuals become interested in the welfare of their own and other souls.

Herald and Presbyter: It is true, on one hand, that revivals can not be manufactured to order, but it is also true that "the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence and the violent take it by force." John the Baptist came to prepare the way for the coming of Christ, and he will do his own divine work.

The Congregationalist: The worth of life is in its friendships; in rough ways one learns their value, and on sunny heights it is the presence of a friend that makes joy satisfying. One might have all of wealth the world can give, all of success that ever crowns human effort, and if he had no friend his prosperity would be in vain.

N. Y. Christian Intelligencer: The only worship acceptable to God, is that of the heart, which is "in spirit and in truth," and of such worship prayer is an essential part; but, when it degenerates into a mere form, when men draw near to God with their lips, while their heart is far from Him, it is only a solemn mockery.

Lutheran Observer: The clergyman has the right to his private political belief which every other must have, but he has not the right to use his office or his pulpit for political purposes. Principles of righteousness alone may be discussed in his official work, and when he deals with those principles, none can charge him with stepping beyond the bounds either of duty or of propriety.

N. Y. Christian Advocate: The worst forms of self-indulgence show themselves frequently in the pulpit. There may be precomposed rant as well as extemporaneous and there are preachers whose moods enthral them. In the morning they are "sweetness and light," in the evening lurid flames; or, again, in the morning they reveal an unction of damnation, followed in the evening by an attempted reparation and an excess of pathetic persuasion.

Salvation is all received by faith. Faith is the channel through which God communicates all grace to the soul. A narrow, contracted faith hinders the inflow of God's grace. The full assurance of faith brings full salvation.