

# The Pulpit.

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## The Problem of the Unemployed—in Our Churches.

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The problem of the unemployed is engaging the attention of the industrial world everywhere. In Australia, a country which has so much in common with these United States of America in which we live, I found that the problem of the unemployed was a most serious and acute one. Owing to the financial distress which for some time had prevailed men were out of work and were parading the streets in organized companies asking for work or asking for bread.

England and France, Germany and Russia, and all the other continental nations have had to cope with this problem of the unemployed. Even in Canada, which God has so bountifully blessed, this problem is not an unknown one, though perhaps as little is known of it here as in any land beneath the sun. But the problem of the unemployed is not confined to the industrial world. It is found in all our churches, and is the chronic problem which attends every great religious enterprise. It is easy enough for a certain gifted few to find employment in religious work. The over-loaded pastor is asked to take new burdens, the deacons and elders, and stewards and Sunday school superintendents are loaded down oftentimes almost to the point of exhaustion.

The problem is not to find work for those already over-worked men, but for the rank and file, the average men and women, the young men and women, the inconspicuous, the shrinking, the bashful. To solve this problem the Endeavor Society has set itself resolutely to work, and in ten thousand churches all over the world I believe it has practically for a multitude of young people solved this problem of ever increasing seriousness.

The prayer-meeting pledge applies to every one. In the weekly prayer service every one however young or bashful, or inexperienced, has some part to take.

At the consecration meeting the name of every active member is called and his individual responsibility is thrust upon him. He is for a moment at least taken out of the ranks of the unemployed and given something to do. "For Christ and the Church." The idea of the committee work is the very same, to provide some suitable and appropriate employment for every member. In the ideal society some place to work will be found for every member.

These things I believe are established in the Christian Endeavor movement. These are the first principles on which it rests. The battle for the Endeavor Society has waged around the pledge. It has been laughed at and sneered at, laid one side and ignored, but generally in the end it has been accepted heartily and enthusiastically. So it is with the consecration meeting and the different forms of committee work. All these things we will hold to no less tenaciously than of old. These are the very foundation on which the movement rests. These matters are established if any thing can be established. Yet while we hold as tenaciously as ever to these established principles it is not time for us to go on to other things and to use the strength and love and inspiration which have come from these fundamental ideas in a wider service for church and country and Christ. Let us extend our work and bring in our unemployed resources. The problem of the unemployed assumes new phases which we cannot ignore.

There are employed powers of good citizenship which we should use for the Master's sake. If the hosts of Christian Endeavorers in all America, 1,900,000 strong, should resolve that they would never cast their vote or use their influence in any way for the election of a bad man or for the promotion of a bad political measure our halls of legislature would very soon be wonderfully purified. I am not advocating a new political party or the massing of all Christian Endeavorers in any one political party that now exists, but I am advocating that upon which we can all agree, the support of good men and good measures and eternal opposition to bad men and bad measures in our own party and in every other.

The creation of a mighty public sentiment among the growing hosts of young people is possible, a sentiment which is absolutely irresistible, which will make bad men tremble and good men honored and the saints and angels above rejoice.

After the wonderful convention in New York City of 1892 the secular papers all over the country contained in their editorial columns the sentiment that a new moral force was rising up within the land, that the young people were becoming awakened to their moral and religious and political duties as never before, that this sentiment must be reckoned with in the future by all political parties, that bad men could not be elected in the future days when these young people came into power, and that iniquitous legislation would be defeated and would defeat the party that proposed it as surely as it was attempted. Let us make this prophecy a reality for the glad days that are to come.

Then there are unemployed powers of benevolence which have never been used as they might for the advancement of the Master's kingdom. We have been content to play with the subject of missions. We have given pennies when we should have given dimes, and dimes when we should have given dollars. A new and blessed era of wider benevolence is being ushered in. It is no longer respectable for a rich man to die and leave millions of dollars to his own immediate family without remembering the general public good. One of these days it will not be respectable for a poor man to live and not do some good with the income that is intrusted to him according to his means.

We have talked about two cents a week for missions. By some blessed process of evolution this sum will be increased one of those days to \$2 a week for some of us and \$200 a week for others of us.

I have been doing a little sum in mental arithmetic lately. Among our 1,900,000 members there are at least 300,000 income earners. The average income of these Christian Endeavorers is not less than \$500 a year. That means that these Christian young people are earning at the very least the enormous sum of \$150,000,000, every twelve months. One tenth of this sum would mean \$15,000,000 for missions, far more than is given by all the living men and women of the United States of America and Canada to-day for these purposes. Oh, when will we call into use these unemployed forces which are lying idle in our pocket books and send them about doing good like Cromwell's silver saints, whom he coined into money and sent about their business.

Once more there are unemployed forces of fellowship for us to use. We have not begun to exhaust the patrimony which our Father in Heaven has given us in this respect. What a blessed thing it is that here we can meet in our blessed interdenominational brotherhood and make one fact more prominent than any other, that fact that we are all Christians. We are Methodists and

Baptists, Presbyterians and Congregationalists, Lutherans and Quakers and Disciples of Christ, but here we have come together on a broad platform of common service.

We cannot all agree in our creed. We cannot agree in our church polity or form of government, but we can agree in Christian Endeavor. This is more than a mere conglomeration of young people's societies. It is a union of societies of Christian Endeavor, which is a vastly different thing.

Whatever denominational name we may be known by Christian Endeavor—Christian Service—is the common denominator. This is a union and a fellowship which the world has not known before.

It is a very striking thing that of all countries I have visited, Turkey, under the reactionary rule of the timid tyrant who reigns at Constantinople, is the only land where Christian Endeavor is not allowed to exist by governmental edict and the reason is that the Sultan is afraid of our fellowship, of our united work, of our combination together in Christ's service.

What the Sultan does not want, Christians do want. Thank God that this fellowship is growing wider with every rising sun. Society has been adopted and endorsed by no less than eleven evangelical denominations in America, and by many others in Australia and England, while there is the United

Society for China, another for Japan, and the work is being pushed in India, Madagascar and all the world around. Since the first day of last July we have added 4,000 societies and 200,000 members to our ranks. For this growing fellowship let us thank God that the problem of these unemployed fellowships of the past is being solved.

But our work will not be done until every Church of our Lord Jesus Christ is included in this fellowship and in this vital union of Christian Endeavor we all advance together against the united ranks of the common enemy of all righteousness. Who will forbid the banners that the young people of all evangelical denominations should not be united together? Who will weaken or strive to rend our fellowship in two? Who will take the responsibility of keeping a single company of young people out of this glorious fellowship that desires to unite in it?

At the great international convention in Cleveland next July, which promises to exceed all its great predecessors, one hundred "diplomas" will be given.

A huge roll of honor will also be prepared on which will be inscribed the name of every society that gives \$10 or more through its own denominational board for home or foreign missions during the coming year. I hope that every society in this province will have its name inscribed on this roll of honor. These diplomas and banners will be nothing in themselves, but simply expressions of the earnest work and purpose of Christian Endeavor hosts to solve the problem of the unemployed, to bring into use our powers of Good Citizenship, of practical benevolence, of enlarged fellowship, which are all inspired by and rooted into the spiritual purpose of the society, for which the Pledge and the Consecration Meeting and the Lookout Committee have ever stood. May God grant that a glorious year of work may attend the efforts of every society, and that every member may contribute his quota of effort to the practical solution of the problem of the unemployed forces of Christ's Church.



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