

# THE CANADIAN EPWORTH ERA

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## Editorial

### An Unfailing Law

The farmer does not expect to take out of his land a bounteous crop of wheat or oats unless he puts something into it in the way of seed and cultivation, but some of our Epworth League members appear to be looking for results without paying much attention to the means. They seem rather disappointed when they get no blessing out of a meeting into which they have failed to put time and effort, but it is an unfailing law of nature that everything worth having must be paid for. District League officers who do little or no advertising for their Annual Convention, and are satisfied with hastily throwing a programme together, need not be surprised if the Convention is a failure. You cannot get out of a Convention any more than you put into it. When a gathering of this kind is a success, it can safely be concluded that some one has put brains and hard work into it. This is a principle that always holds good.

### They Belong to Christ

In the book review section of this paper attention is called to Rev. George Jackson's new book on "Conversion," which is a common-sense treatment of an old subject. The author draws largely upon history and religious biography in discussing various kinds of spiritual change. We are glad that he has shown so clearly that there may be infinite variety in the religious experiences of different people, and while not dealing with the subject at any length, he has pointed out that there may be in the Church many "once born" children of God, who have never left the Father's house nor ever known the darkness and want of the far-off country. He does not, like some misguided people, expect that children brought up in Christian homes shall pass through anything like the same kind of spiritual crisis as the hardened sinner. Very early in life they learn to love God, just as they come into the knowledge of their mother's love. As Dr. Dale suggests, the number of such persons might be indefinitely increased if we did not imply in so much that we say to them that they belong to the devil and have to be brought to Christ, while the truth is, that they belong to Christ and have to be kept from the devil.

The need for evangelistic work will probably always

exist, but prevention is vastly more important. Childhood is the greatest opportunity for the Church. To keep our boys and girls from wandering away from God should be the greatest concern of the Church. Christian homes, Sunday Schools and other educative agencies are the hope of the world. There should not be any less attention to the "conversion" of the sinner, but vastly more to the nurture of the child.

### The Congregation and the School

Not long ago a company of Toronto Sunday School officers assembled to discuss some questions relating to their work. The conversation turned on the attitude of our congregations generally to the Sunday School, and the general opinion seemed to be that the average church member showed small interest in the school. The question was asked: "Is there a church of any size in any of our cities that expends as much in supporting its Sunday School as it pays yearly to keep up the choir?" The answer was in the negative. It is, however, not in the matter of financial backing that the congregation is most lacking, but rather in showing personal sympathy and interest with the work of the teachers. How seldom do we see the leading officials in the Sunday School! How few of them are actively engaged in the work! In a general way they admit that this is the most important department of church activity, but they are satisfied to allow others to bear the responsibility of carrying it on. The present condition of affairs needs to be changed. Pastors should call attention to the Sunday School as the field of greatest opportunity, and summon with bugle blast the best and most active people in the church to engage in it.

### Small Change for Sunday

The editor of *Saturday Night* gives the following illustration of how many people treat the claims of the Church:

In a candy store on Bloor Street on Saturday evening last a man and his wife were making some purchases. The husband was standing back, leaving the conduct of affairs in more capable hands than his own, until his wife, taking out her purse, began to pay for the confectionery with a number of five and ten cent pieces. Then the husband stepped forward, touched his wife on the shoulder, and in a voice distinctly heard by other customers, said, warningly:

"Keep your small change for Sunday."

She did. Little comment on this scene is necessary. It may be suggested by way of excuse for this man and woman that they may have had a number of children at home who would have to be supplied with collection two or three times on the following day, but even then is it not somewhat startling to find a church-going couple paying out quarters or half-dollars for candy on Saturday night and thriftily saving their nickels and dimes for church next day? Yet these people are not different from others. They only happened to speak and be overheard, for is it not true that all over Canada people are "keeping their small change for Sunday?"

The churches have not much chance to guide and control the world's morality so long as their members cheerfully pay out more money on Saturday to see a baseball or lacrosse match than they grudgingly deposit on the collection plates on Sunday. It cannot be inspiring to a