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Loving to do Good

"Never did any soul do the same again, with more enjoyment. Never was love, or gratitude, or bounty practised but with increasing joy, which made the practiser still more in love with the fair act."—Shaftesbury.

A Morning in May

All the earth is gay:
Land and sea
Give themselves up to jollity,
And with the heart of May
Doth every beast keep holiday;—
Thou child of joy
Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts,
Thou happy shepherd boy!

Ye blessed creatures, I have heard the call
Ye to each other make; I see
The heavens laugh with you in your jubilee;
My heart is at your festival,
My head hath its coronal,
The fulness of your bliss, I feel—I feel
It all.

O evil day! if I were sullen
While Earth herself is adorning
This sweet May morning;
And the children are pulling
On every side,
In a thousand valleys far and wide,
Fresh flowers; while the sun shines
warm,
And the beads leap up on his mother's
arm;—
I hear, I hear, with joy I hear.
—Wordsworth.

May was so named by Romulus, the founder of Rome, in honor of Maia, the mother of Mercury; but its Saxon name signifies "Three milkings," as they then milked their cows three times daily.—Loaring.



Our initial message this month is suggested by the words of the renowned Englishman who was himself a perfect illustration of his own statement.

On The Earl of Shaftesbury did good deeds from love of the habit, and because he possessed in abundant measure the spirit of his Master, his public life strikingly exemplified the practice of Him, who so uniquely "went about doing good." Perhaps no human being ever lived, but did a good deed to another in some line of need; at least, my estimate of humanity prevents my thinking otherwise. But while occasional kindly actions may be presupposed of every man, only the predominance of the Christ spirit can make such deeds of regular, constant, and joyous practice. And it is mainly for the development of this spirit and the cultivation of the practical helpfulness to which it prompts, that our Epworth Leagues exist. They must educate our young people in the art of doing good, or fail of their supreme design. To become skillful in the practice of Christian philanthropy means much more than attending League meetings or even contributing to League funds, no matter how worthy the objects they support may be. Going to church is good, giving money is commendable; but neither the one nor the other, nor both combined, can realize for the Christian the greatest benefit, or help him accomplish the real purpose of living, as every follower of Jesus Christ should aim to do.

possess, but that we may dispense to others whose need is greater than ours. Such getting means abiding self-enrichment, for we must not forget that there is that which scattereth and yet increaseth, and there is also that which holdeth and tendeth to poverty. Our Epworth Leagues do not perform their full nor their most important function when they teach our young people to be good. They fail, if they do not train them how to use the goodness they have in adding to the sum total of good in the world of humanity all about them. Get to have, and having to have, and you will soon lose what you have. Get to give, and giving makes others happy through your ministry, and you will gain abundance as you add to their store. Shaftesbury proved this in his long life of Christian activity, as we may prove it in a less degree in ours.

The outward act of helpfulness is desirable; but only as it is prompted by a kindly spirit, can its true value be realized. Not the receiver but the giver is the greatest beneficiary when a truly Christian deed has been performed. Much so-called Christian philanthropy is unenjoyable because the agent engaged in it is not actuated by the true Christ spirit. Motive is of supreme value here. Not how many good deeds, but my spirit in the doing of them, determines my true worth before Him, whose deeds were always and everywhere love prompted and controlled. A loving heart finds a way whereby the habit of doing good becomes easy, and its practice is made so that we would lose all sense of drudgery in our daily service to others, we must know some higher motive than stern, compelling duty; we must be able to say, "the love of Christ constraineth me." Then, and never till then, will we really fall in love with doing good and perform every kindly outward act in the inward spirit of true Christ-like sympathy. Our privilege is to emulate Shaftesbury in this, as he reflected his Lord, and our hope is that every Epworth League shall train thousands to prove the truth of the words of the eminent English earl.

As long as a young person's thought is centred on getting good, he must have at best a narrow vision of the Christ life. The very desire to be constantly receiving, even from our Heavenly Father, may promote selfishness. When our gifts are nothing more than pitting for gifts from God's abundant store, we are in danger of becoming poor, rather than rich, for true riches are not in material possessions, but in spirit and purpose dwelling within the soul and prompting to the wise use of what we have, as stewards of the manifold grace of God. We get, not so much that we may add to the store we already