

Practical Methods of Co-operation Between the Sunday School and Epworth League

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THE two great principles underlying all development and progress, mental, social and moral, are competition and co-operation. Competition is the act of striving for something that is sought for by another at the same time. Co-operation is the act of working together to accomplish a common aim. Competition, good when kept within bounds, when freed from restraint, leads to disaster and destruction. Co-operation tends to efficiency and achievement. Competition tends always to selfishness, and, therefore, to a dissolution of the forces which make for noble character. Co-operation, on the other hand, is based on altruism, and, therefore, is one of the fundamental principles of good character and upright living.

IN CHURCH LIFE.

History tells us of the operation of these two great principles of competition and co-operation in church life. Wherever churches have entered into competition, either with words or with swords, it has always ended disastrously for one or all competitors. But where churches have seen their common aims, and where they have co-operated to com-

plete each other, and to devise ways and means to achieve the same end, the results have always made for the inauguration of a new era with ideals higher than those which have been before projected. So in the individual church, the principle of co-operation is most important. The pastor, the officials and the societies must work together for the realization of the common aim of the church, which essentially is to present Christ in all His fullness, as the Saviour of the people.

"This Institute has demonstrated emphatically the value of educating our young people in METHODS. It will undoubtedly result in untold blessing and phenomenal results in the near future. It is by all odds the best planned and best carried out Convention of any kind I ever was privileged to attend."—Rev. Henry A. Fish, Kleinburg.

Too frequently each of the organizations in a single church is an end in itself, having no conception of the aims which it has in common with another or with other societies of the same church. The result necessarily is, that the ideal and work of that society is localized and restricted, and the final result must be atrophy and death. But, when an organization looks beyond itself and sees other societies organized for the same or similar purposes, and thinks out ways whereby it can assist them in the attainment of their ends, and looks even beyond the church into the great world, with its multiplicity of needs, that organization has seen the vision and has begun to grow.

THE WORK NOT DISSIMILAR.

The Sunday School and Epworth League are two such organizations. Their work is not dissimilar. Both have to do

with the development of character and training for service. Both stand for righteousness and truth. Both are working for the extension of the Kingdom. It is true, as we shall see, that the work of the Sunday School is not altogether the same as the work of the Epworth League. If the work of the Sunday School were the same as the work of the League, then it might be a matter for discussion as to whether the Sunday School and the League should not federate or actually unite their forces and organizations. But their work under their present organizations is not the same. The specialized work, at least, is different, and yet not so different as to be wholly separate. Just as there are persons in the world who complement or complete or fill out each other's lives, so these two great organizations complement or complete or fill out each other. Granted this complementary relation between the Epworth League and the Sunday School, we have a condition which is most favorable to co-operation.

What are some of the ways or practical methods in which it is desirable that these two great bodies should co-operate to accomplish definite work?

TEACHERS AND LEADERS.

1. Trained Teachers and Leaders. The Sunday School and Epworth League might co-operate in providing trained teachers and leaders. We agreed that the fundamental idea of the Sunday School was teaching, or, from the standpoint of the scholar, learning. It is, therefore, of the greatest importance that the teachers of the Sunday School should be thoroughly competent and equipped to do their work. In the public school the qualifications for teaching are generally being raised, and special emphasis is being laid upon the necessity for teachers to study child-life. So, in the Sunday School, the time has come when the teacher should be familiar not only with Bible truths, but should have as wide a knowledge as possible of the characteristics of childhood, and the adolescent period, and how to relate Bible truths to these different periods. It is, of course, admitted that it is impossible for the Sunday School teacher to devote as much time to training and preparation as the public school teacher, for while the latter chooses teaching as a profession, the former gives his time voluntarily and free to Sunday School work, and carries on his remunerating profession at the same time. However, if it is worth while for the Sunday School teacher to work at all in the Kingdom of God, then it is worth while for that teacher to put his very best life into the work, for it is the greatest work in the world, and there is little excuse in these days, when literature of all kinds is so close at hand, and when other means of acquiring knowledge are so easy of access, for lack of preparation. God wants our best. He asks nothing more. He will be satisfied with nothing less.

The superintendents present can testify how difficult it is to find regular, good teachers, or even to supply teachers to churches where regular teachers are absent. It is true that some effort is being made to organize Normal Training Classes in the schools among adult scholars, but up to the present time this has not solved the problem. What, then, is the remedy? Turn your attention for a moment to the

League where there are young men and women looking for something to do, many of them old Sunday School scholars, and possessing good ability, and who are, I believe, some of them waiting to be organized into a normal training class. This will, to some extent, save the League, and by save I mean enlarge and extend its usefulness. It will save the League, and at the same time increase the efficiency of the teaching staff of the school. It will save the League because it presents routine duties. It will make more efficient the Sunday School, inasmuch as it will give a continuous supply of teachers to the superintendent.

Here is an instance where a weakness of the Sunday School is the League's opportunity. The school needs teachers; the League has the young people who

"The Institute has provided just what I have been needing—an inspiration to utilize the latent power of our young people. One large thought, repeated again and again in the Institute, will help us in our practical work on circuits, viz.: the Sunday School is a teaching agent, the Epworth League is a training agent."—Rev. H. E. Wellwood, Chatsworth.

have in them the mental and moral stuff out of which teachers are made, and whose energies, under present conditions, are largely running to waste. A normal training school in every League in Toronto Conference, with the pastor, superintendent, or some competent worker as leader, would at once contribute to the development of the League, and be an inspiration to the superintendent, officers and teachers of the school.

MISSIONARY WORK.

2. The Sunday School and Epworth League might co-operate in the great missionary enterprise.

The Sunday School in respect to missionary enterprises is a great field white unto the harvest. May not the Epworth Leaguers who are active Sunday School workers become the harvesters in this great field. For ten years the Leagues have been organizing systematically in the Forward Movement for Missions, with its basic principles of "Pray, Study, Give." During the past few months there has been developed in some churches the idea that this great movement may

"The programme presented was carefully planned, unique, and designed to create in our young people a strong desire to equip themselves for service by becoming earnest students of the Bible, the Missionary problem, the art of teaching and practical plans of work. In this it was a great success."—Rev. G. W. Robinson, Thornhill.

do as much, if not more, for the Sunday School. There are, in fact, a number of instances in Toronto Conference where the Forward Movement has been introduced into the League with results which are almost startling.

I think almost invariably the increased interest which is being shown in the schools in missionary enterprises can be traced to the initiative of missionary enthusiasts in the League who have, at the same time, been active workers in the