

## YOUNG PEOPLE'S PROBLEMS

### What is the Church?

There will be no attempt to discuss these questions in technical terms. We want to be plain so that he who runs may read. Once upon a time Jesus Christ came to this world. His work was different from that of other men who had come. He set Himself to help and heal, to lift morally and enlighten spiritually all with whom He came into contact. He called others to help. They did. They were immediately given something to do. These formed the Church. In other words the Church folks were the people who helped Jesus do His work. The supreme test of membership as given by Jesus was ministry of service. Belief was useful as it helped make men better servants. So to-day creeds, rituals, doctrines, theologies, are good as they make men more useful. Are you willing to help Jesus with His work? Then you belong to His Church. He needs help more than ever.

### Are People Drifting Away from the Church?

Some are. But there is a reason. Some people do not like the programme of the Church. They resent having their consciences disturbed. They do not want their deeds reproved. Then some are drifting away from the Church because they do not like the programme of the Church members, and from what we know of some of them we cannot wonder at that. Where a Church is alive to its mission, and understands the signs of the time, goes after lost souls like the shepherd after the lost sheep, welcomes prodigals like the father in the Parable, and steadfastly pursues this course, people will not drift away. You can depend on the Lord Himself co-operating with such a Church and giving it the victory.

But if you have Pharisees in the pews and on the boards, and elder brothers with their ill-temper around, you can look for a drifting away. So in answer to the question we may say, "All depends on what the Church is like."

With the Sunday school training the young as it is there ought to be better church attendance in the next generation than in this. At present I think more people attend church than ever.

### Why Isn't the Church Open every Night in the Week?

Like the Pool Rooms, Bowling Alleys, and Bar-rooms?

If there were no other alternative as between the church parlor, and these other places I would say that the church ought to be open every night.

But look, the church is open several nights a week. Are the people all in it who should be there? Are they there to worship and help? If not, they should be. If they are merely looking for entertainment they will find that the church is not making a business of that kind of thing alone.

The church is the idealist among organizations. "We there is no vision the people perish." The Church teaches what a right life means, and inculcates as far as possible its teaching. It cannot run all the institutions of the community, yet its spirit may leaven all these institutions.

If the Church—the average Church—

is not open every night that may be because it is not materially equipped to provide all kinds of amusements; or it may be because the Church thinks young men should take two or three nights at least in their own homes. If you think the Church is not doing its duty socially, get on the inside and help it, but don't forget its primary mission—worship.

### If the Methodist Church is Opposed to Games of Chance

Card Playing, Dancing, Betting, and such things, why was the rule relating to these things taken from the Discipline?

There was no direct rule relating to these things at all. Some years ago a "footnote" was added to the rules giving this special interpretation of the original rules. Mr. Wesley drew the original rules up in 1739—quite a while ago, by the way—but he was very careful to avoid literal prescriptions. He left the guidance of questionable things just where Paul did, to the enlightened Christian conscience and the regenerated heart. That is the only safe way to guide Christian men. So long as there was a semblance of rule about these matters our Church denied its members the right of private judgment. As the east stands now all kinds and forms of amusement stand on their merits, and preachers and teachers are free to express their views and give reasons for them. We should seek the leadership of the Spirit who dominates through the awakened heart rather than by some arbitrary rule. The footnote at the General Conference put in place of the old one is we think far superior to the one deleted. Read it!

### Should we Give to the Support of the Church when we are already in Debt?

A man owes more to the Church than to any other institution on the earth. He really has no debt that takes precedence of that. "How much owest thou my Lord?" Should a man put a roof on his house before he has the basement paid for? Should a man buy food when he has not paid for his coat? You see the contrast is entirely unfair.

The Church represents an interest in our lives and in society that cannot without great danger be neglected. Some of the best churches Canada ever had were kept up by pioneers who mortgaged their farms to keep them going. Use good judgment of course about handling your means, but let your church share in a generous place in your plans.

### Are Conversions Dying Out?

I think they are not. There is a great difference of opinion about the meaning of conversion. Some have a type of conversion in mind such as that experienced by the Philippian jailor. That is their standard. If they do not see such things going on they will tell you that there are no conversions taking place. A moment's consideration would bring about a better understanding. We do not find such an experience in the life of Samuel, Moses, Matthew, Timothy and so forth, yet they were unquestionably men of God. As a matter of fact, the jailor drops immediately out of sight despite his spectacular conversion.

Conversion is the experience of becoming conscious of our salvation through Christ. We may come to that consciousness quietly or by a stormy experience. In these days of Christian teaching through the home, Sunday school, pulpit, and through personal influence, we may naturally expect more of the quiet sort of conversion than any other kind. But in any case let us not make the mistake of proscribing how the Spirit of God should work. His ways are mysterious but effective.

### What is a Christian?

Simple as this question appears, there is probably none harder to answer. The familiarity of the term "Christian" leads to carelessness in understanding its meaning. In looking into the question we must bear in mind that our answer should meet the needs of all. It must be Christian from all angles and to all standpoints and to all generations.

The first time the term "Christian" was used was at Antioch, where "Disciples" were called by that name. Disciple is a learner. These men and women were learning Christ. As they did they became like Him in spirit and action. Hence the "nickname" Christian.

So to be a Christian is to be a learner or disciple of Christ. It is not simply to understand about Him. It is not accepting a creed. It is to take Him as Saviour, Lord, Ideal, Friend, all in all, and letting our whole soul go after Him. We are not to set bounds to His personality like the Unitarian. Let us rather say with Charles Wesley, the poet, "Thou, O Christ, art all I want."

A Christian then is one who takes Christ for His "all in all." He makes Him his whole Saviour and Master.

### What do you Think about the Moving Picture Business?

Well, I think it is here to stay, because the eye is never tired of seeing. But much of what is shown is rather below the proper standard. We must remember that the business is handled commercially for profit. Those who manage it will show that which will bring in the largest profits. If you see a picture below par, say so. The managers are very sensitive about the views of the patrons. Get after the censors where you can and tell them what you think is best. At the present time I think there is a good opportunity of striking for a higher ideal in the movies. People are getting tired of the cheap poses and cowboy escapades, which have been on so often. There is a chance to appeal for something more educative and interesting at the same time.

### What do you think of Tithing as a Method of Giving?

As a principle, teaching regular and proportionate giving, it is good. As a rule to be rigidly observed it is poor. The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. There are times when in order to save their church from dishonor men may be called to "give" more than a tenth. A division that speaks of one part as the Lord's and nine parts as our own is un-Christian. All belongs to God. A man with an income of \$1,000, with five children, say, and a mother to keep, is not in as good a position to give a tenth as his neighbor without any children at all is to give three tenths. Distinction should be made between the letter and the principle of tithing.

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