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A Tendency that Needs Watching.

“WHEN the devil cannot upset the coach, he mounts
the dickey and drives,” is an adage verified in
the progress of every good cause. “The end sanctifies
the means,” in the sense that things questionable may
properly be done to advance a good cause, and that
“we must fight the devil with his own weapons,” are
popular aphorisms but are not consistent with Chris-
tian integrity. There is to-day in all the churches,
Protestant as well as Roman Catholic, a strong drift
towards more than questionable expedients, professedly
with the view of winning the careless and unbelieving
for Christ, and saving them.

Our Sabbath schools are in danger of failure by not
insisting on thorough work being done, lest some chil-
dren take offence and go to other schools where more
is done to please and entertain. Nearly every school is
vying with the others in providing pleasant rooms,
interesting literature, concerts, anniversary meetings,
pic-nics, prizes, etc., so as to draw children to the school,
and success is judged of by the numbers who are by
these devices induced to attend. The avowed design is
to interest, entertain and please, in the hope that some
thus induced to attend may be won for Christ.

Then we have now Young Peoples' Societies and
Guilds, Sodalties, Brotherhoods, King's Daughters, and
of late pre-eminent over all the rest, the Y. P. C. E.
Societies. At the present time such associations are
hopefully regarded as supplying the missing link between
the world and the church. An effort is made to gather
in our careless, pleasure seeking into them, in the hope
that by from time to time associating with Christian
young men and women in religious exercises and church
work these worldly minded persons may receive spiritual
benefit. In order to attract such, as they do not like,
nay have an aversion to spiritual exercises, it is neces-
sary to provide social gatherings and exercises which
are not religious. So we have social committees to
arrange for excursions, sleighing parties, at-homes,
pic-nics, etc., where such games and pastimes may be
engaged in as suit the tastes, and afford pleasure to
irreligious young people. Nor has it stopped there, but
in some churches there are literary societies and clubs
formed, gymnastics established, and even entertainments
festal, theatrical and spectacular are provided as part
of the church work.

In vain earnest Christians lift their voice in warning.
The marvellous success of the new methods, it is said,
prove them to be beneficial. If the world will not come
to the church and share its spiritual joys; then, we are

told, the church should come to the world and take part
in worldly amusements, provided through men and
women with means, all professedly consecrated to God,
entertainment and sensuous delights for worldlings.
Earnestly do we ask Christian men and women whither
such carnal expedients will lead. Church history may
instruct us, as well as Scripture, that “conformity to
the world” for any reason is wrong. The church was
not intended by Christ to provide carnal entertainments,
amusements, and social feasting; that was no part of
Christ's mission and is no part of ours. The apostles
reproved such things “Have ye not houses to eat and
drink in?” Men cannot thus be drawn to Christ. They
may be induced to connect themselves more or less
closely to a church which thus gratifies their worldly
tastes, but they will remain outside of the Kingdom of
God. A man who has been induced to join a church
for worldly or carnal reasons, will leave it when he can
be better served and pleased elsewhere. The love of
pleasure cannot constrain to holiness or Christian ser-
vice; it cannot take the place of love to Christ. Sweep-
ing unconverted youths into our churches for the sake
of “having a good time” is a great mistake; such mem-
bers and adherents are a source of weakness, and such
doings grieve the Spirit of God. Why should Chris-
tians forsake the old ways which in the past have pro-
duced stalwart, devoted Christian men and women?
Why should churches turn to new devices, and instead
of drawing men by a Christ “lifted up,” vainly try to
attract them by providing for the lusts of the flesh and
gratifying the pride of life. A single eye to the glory
of God is not compatible with the main effort being to
please the natural man, in the hope that they may be
induced thereby to serve God. The attempt is as
absurd and foolish, as it is dishonoring to God and
hurtful to man. There is great need of careful watch-
ing lest Satan “transformed into an angel of light”
should bring our church work to confusion and ruin.

Sir George Williams.

Among the honors which were conferred to cele-
brate the Queen's birthday, that in which the Christian
world is most interested is the knighthood bestowed on
George Williams, the founder of the Young Mens' Christian
Association system. Too seldom has the
state acknowledged, by such honors as it can give, the
work of Christian men as such; decorations are usual-
ly for those who have attained eminence in military or
civil life. This is surely a mistake, for while the reward
of Christ's disciple is not of this world, the world owes
it to him as an acknowledgement of worth. Some
good people oppose such titles on various grounds, but
without discussing the merits of the question, it will
be granted that if there be any propriety in publicly
acknowledging personal merit, then those devoted men
who live for the spiritual welfare of their fellow men,
ought certainly to be the recipients of public distinctions.

No title can add to the fame or to the greatness of
the venerable founder of the Young Mens' Christian
Association. His life-work will be his enduring monu-
ment, ever pointing out what may be accomplished by
individual effort when guided by and blessed of God.
Indeed his career has been marvellous. His first small
meeting of his fellow-employees, the conversion of the
head of the business house in which he was employed,
his genius for organization, his successful efforts among