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Bringing Sinners to Christ.

Bishop Isaac W. Joyce.

WHOEVER will give himself to the work of bringing sinners to Christ must do so with a desperation of purpose. This is essential. But be it known everywhere that such a state of mind and of heart cannot be obtained by any methods of human training. The schools can neither teach it nor confer it. It can be obtained only from God, through the personal, prayerful study of his Word and an absolute abandonment of self to God, and an unreserved dependence upon the Holy Spirit. This is neither rant, cant, nor wild-fire. It will not always fit into formal moulds, nor will it run in ice-bound ruts. It will not be pleasing to people who are under the esthetic influence of a heartless and non-responsive formalism. But it will be pleasing to God and wonderfully helpful to the church of Jesus Christ. It will make her a power in drawing men into the kingdom of love and grace. It will make a way for itself. It will distribute its power effectively far and wide, according to methods which the fathers of the church understood. They had it, and conquered and triumphed by it. Such a salvation movement is now at hand. It is at our doors. I thank God that our Epworth League army has already entered into this work with a faith which means victory along the entire line. Already Christ, the head of the church, is giving them some glorious victories. I pray that this army of young Methodist people will continue to go steadily and prayerfully forward to the moment of final victory and broadest triumph, and that millions of souls shall be won for Christ and the best life in his service.

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The Epworth League International Convention.

The Sixth International Epworth League convention, which met in Detroit, Mich., Thursday, July 16, was in every respect the most interesting ever held. It was not only the largest in point of numbers, the attendance being between twenty-five and thirty thousand, but—what is more important—it was the most spiritual in character. The keynote was given in the convention watchwords:

Waiting—"Tarry ye."

Witnessing—"Ye shall be witnesses unto me."

Working—"Created in Christ Jesus unto good works."

A high spiritual tone was pitched at the opening session Thursday evening, the special topics being "The first Pentecost," "The eighteenth-century Pentecost," "The object of our present waiting." The deep religious impression then made was displayed in every service. The young people in attendance had evidently gone to the convention—not for an excursion—but for a spiritual blessing, and they received it.

The four large meeting-places were crowded at every session, and even at the sunrise service held early Friday morning about two thousand were present. The Sunday services were marvelous demonstrations of spiritual power. After a most inspiring sermon by Bishop Joyce at Simpson church, sixty-five young men and women bowed at the altar seeking the experience of conversion or the blessing of a pure heart. The presence of the Holy Spirit was manifest during the day. The most notable, at least the most unique, service was the love-feast at Central church, led by Governor J. H. Mickey of Nebraska. Such a scene was never before witnessed in any Methodist meeting. There were present representatives from every state in the Union; from every province of Canada, and from lands beyond the sea. They were united not only as members of the league, but in heart. The scene will never be forgotten by those who witnessed it, when Governor Mickey, having declared that one of the most blessed impressions that he would carry away from the meeting was that there was no longer a North or a South, and that he could clasp hands with his brother from the South and realize that now all are one in Christ Jesus. As he finished these words Dr. J. J. Tigert, editor of the *Methodist Quarterly Review* of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, arose and stepped forward and Governor Mickey and Dr. Tigert put their arms around each other. The scene awakened fervent responses of "Amen!" and "Hallelujah!" and brought tears to many eyes. Testimonies were given by individuals and states. The unity of Methodists in faith was never more thrillingly exhibited than in this meeting, which will ever be memorable.

The afternoon meeting for men in Tent Ontario was a most interesting service. It was truly a men's meeting and its freedom of spirit was shown in the fact that probably more than a thousand sat in their shirt-sleeves—a suggestion that the Epworth league may have a field of opportunity in reaching men who would attend open-air religious services in which they might exercise the same freedom in dress that they do while at work.

A significant feature of the whole convention was the enthusiastic response to every utterance against the liquor traffic and the debasing and corrupting saloon. This was shown in all the services, and the love-feast at Central church was in the testimonies a combination of a class-meeting and a gospel temperance meeting. There is no doubt of the attitude of the Epworth league on this subject. It is a positive and persistent foe of this awful enemy of mankind.

The convention was a forcible expression of the reviving evangelistic spirit in the church. The entire programme was constructed on that line and both speakers and hearers entered into its spirit. Thousands of these young people will go to their homes with a deeper religious experience in their own souls and with a new zeal for the salvation of their fellows. We cannot now recognize the influence of this great meeting, but the fruits of these days of seed-sowing will begin to be gathered not long hence.

The spirit of the convention was expressed in the resolutions adopted, which are as follows:

The young Methodism of North America, as represented in this convention of more than 20,000 delegates, reflects the spirit and voices the sentiment of 2,000,000 of Epworthians.

Our deliberations have known no differences. Our intercourse is a delight. Distance and national boundaries are incidental. We each love our country, our rulers and our flag; yet we are so made one in Christ that all several interests merge into his kingdom and all souls blend in common kinship.

We rejoice in the continued growth and increasing usefulness of the young people's societies of the churches. We are grateful to Almighty God for the marvelous successes which have come to the Epworth league since the last International convention at San Francisco. The experience of the years gives increasing evidence of the adaptation of the plans of the Epworth league to the spirit and polity of Methodism.

As in the past, we stand for the broadest Christian fraternity. We hail with special satisfaction every opportunity for practical co-operation with other young people's societies in Christian ministry and service.

The Epworth league is not merely a young people's movement, neither is it to be looked upon as a separate department of the church. It aims to be an embodiment of all the activities of our church, a complete manifestation of the spirit of our common Methodism.

First in importance among questions claiming our attention, we place the systematic and devout study of the scriptures both for our own spiritual growth and to give fitness for soul-winning. We consider ourselves called to the work of personal evangelism, and we enjoin all our members to enter the fields now white for harvest. We stand for a present, an abundant and a conscious salvation as essential to that power of witnessing which wins men. We thus send out to the young hosts of our united Methodism this appeal for prayer—a holy waiting at the morning watch, a pleading of the promises of the open Book for a revival which may mean to the twentieth century what the revival of Wesley was to the eighteenth century and to the world.

Epworth leaguers, let us to our knees that we may wield the Spirit's blade!

To us, as to the young people of no other age, comes the trumpet call, "Go ye into all the world;" and go we must for, lifting up our eyes, we behold in many lands gospel opportunities rapidly becoming gospel emergencies.

To remain ignorant or indifferent to the cause of missions is to sin against light and to ignore the will of God. We, a part of Christ's great army, place at his instant disposal our means, our service and ourselves, that the world may be evangelized in our generation.

The gigantic iniquity of the Anglo-Saxon race is a fostering of the monstrous traffic in intoxicants. We believe the complete disenfranchisement of the business will abolish dangers that threatens us, and clear up problems that perplex us.

This whole evil organization is a fountain of iniquity whose streams poison wherever they flow. It has no redeeming feature. It is an environment of perdition, hence we who stand for Christ and pray for the coming of his kingdom, set our faces, raise our voices, and use our ballots against this enemy of God, and will give it no quarter in social life, in politics—in fact, nowhere, until it is relegated to its own place.

We regard the Christian Sabbath as the bulwark of defense for our

THE EVANGELISTIC SPIRIT IN THE ENGLISH CHURCHES.

An Interview with Rev. R. J. Campbell, Pastor of the City Temple, London.

"In your address to ministers at the Young Men's Christian association in this city, Mr. Campbell, you made some remarks upon the conditions of English religious life which have an interest for American readers. Did we understand you to say that there is a new evangelical spirit observable in the English churches?"

"Yes, I think there is. The statement, of course, requires qualification, as most general statements do. There is an apparent change of mode in the free churches of England which is indicative of spiritual quickening. Many of us believe that there will be something like a religious revival presently. A decade or more ago the laity in the churches rather looked for sermons of a certain critical or intellectual order. A new theology, as it was called, was vigorously discussed from the pulpit. There was a general atmosphere of negation, criticism and discussion of the Christian origins. The evangelical note became less clearly sounded from the pulpit. There was a considerable hearing for a style of preaching which was intellectual rather than spiritual. Now things are changed. A considerable section of the religious public has wearied of negatives and welcomes the evangelical note again."

"Does this mean a return to the old evangelical theology?"

"No, not quite that, though it certainly means a return to the old evangelical fundamentals. I think I am right in saying that obscurantist theology or uncompromising orthodoxy has no great hearing. What is welcome seems to be a combination of liberal views with an evangel, a union of intellectual and spiritual. This combination is now fairly common in our pulpits and especially, I think, among the younger men."

"But how about questions of biblical criticism and the relations between science and religion?"

"It seems to me that the acute stage of controversy in regard to this is just over with us, whereas you are still in the thick of it here. On our side of the water men are coming to feel that, after all, Christianity does not stand or fall by the verdict of criticism or the historicity of this or that book, or by the dicta of scientific men about natural phenomena, or the evidences of design in creation. Christian experience is the final court of appeal and the human spirit craves the assurance which experience has possessed in every age. This Christian experience is being preached again with vigor and obtains a large hearing in spite of much apparent religious indifference."

"Then you do not think that the tendency in England is toward secularism?"

"No, decidedly not. Although statistics appear to demonstrate that regular church attendance is lessened, wherever the note of personal religion is apparent and people go to hear, I think even a non-church-going public exhibits signs of a wistful desire after this."

"Are educated men in general affected by pulpit utterances?"

"No and yes. The ordinary educated layman is not hostile to religion though he commonly stands uncommitted. The favorite mental attitude for years has been that of suspended judgment. The agnostic is not contemptuous of religion as he was, say ten or twenty years ago."

"What are the signs which lead you to hope for a spiritual quickening in England?"

"One is that some of our foremost leaders of thought, in the pulpit and out of it, are men of devout evangelical spirit. Among such I may instance Dr. Horton, the present chairman of the Congregational union of England and Wales, one of our greatest pulpit forces. Lord Kelvin, among scientific men, is of a similar spirit. And Prof. George Adam Smith is an example of the same kind but among the ranks of biblical critics. The younger men in the ministry of the free churches, fully equipped in mental culture as they are, have recovered the evangelical note and there is a spiritual tone among them. There is a movement in the colleges, too, in the same direction. Prayer circles are springing up everywhere with the object of bringing about a revival interest in spiritual things."

"What form do you suppose such a revival may take?"

"Well, the very word revival is perhaps misleading, as it has become associated with a special form of evangelistic method. Some suppose that a fresh baptism of the Spirit may result in a deepening of ethical enthusiasm or an increase of social activity on the part of the churches. I hardly think it will begin this way myself, though undoubtedly these will be part of its results. If we are to judge from history as well as from the present signs, it is in personal religion that the movement should be first felt. And unless one is altogether wrong, from the inferences drawn from the facts now given, this is the very thing which is getting a hearing in the home pulpit. It is not sensationalism or even eloquence which secures a congregation, but the utterance of living personal experience. I have noticed this again and again and what does it betoken but a desire to enter into individual relationship with the living God?"

"Do you observe anything of the same kind in this country?"

"It is difficult for a visitor to judge, but I should say that the movement is a little more pronounced in England than here. But even here I have already met with indications of a revolt against materialism in practice as well as in thought. I feel convinced that if more of your preachers would trouble themselves less about popular themes to attract a multitude and more about the deepest needs of the human soul there would be no lack of a hearing. It seems as though in this part of the world the pulpit runs to narrow and impossible orthodoxy on the one hand or dry-as-dust liberalism on the other. Cannot a new spirit be breathed over both? But it would be an impertinence on the part of a stranger to suggest to Americans what they ought to do and I shall not say more."

WOULD OUR WAY BE BETTER?

Rev. J. R. Miller, D.D., Philadelphia, Pa.

Would it be better if we had the direction of our own affairs? So, sometimes, we are tempted to think. If this were permitted to us, no doubt there would be a great change in the method of what we now call Providence. We would at once eliminate all that is painful and unpleasant in our lot. We would have only prosperities, with no adversities, only joys, with no sorrows. We would exclude pain and all trouble from our life. The days would all be sunny, with no clouds or storms. The paths would all be mossy and strewn with flowers, without thorns or any rough places.

All this has a very pleasing aspect for us when we think of it lightly and in a superficial way. Would not that be better than as we have it now? Would we not be happier, and would not life mean more to us in blessing and good, if we could direct our own affairs and leave out whatever is painful, bitter, adverse or sorrowful? So most of us would probably say at first, before we have thought of the question deeply and looked on to the end. But really the greatest misfortune that could come to us in this world would be to have the direction of the affairs and

the shaping of the experiences of our lives put into our own hands. We have no wisdom to know what is best for ourselves. To-day is not all of life—there is a long future, perhaps many years in this world, and then immortality hereafter. What would give us greatest pleasure to-day might work us harm in days to come. Present gratification might cost us untold loss and hurt in the future.

Our wants and our real needs are not always the same. We want pleasure, plenty, prosperity—perhaps we need pain, self-denial, the giving up of things that we greatly prize. We shrink from suffering, from sacrifice, from struggle—perhaps these are the very experiences which will do the most for us, which will bring out in us the best possibilities of our natures, which will fit us for the largest service to God and man.

There is something wonderfully inspiring in the thought that God has a plan and a purpose for our lives, for each life. We do not come drifting into the world and we do not drift through it, like waifs on the ocean. We are sent from God, each one of us with a divine thought for his life—something God wants us

to do, some place he wants us to fill. All through our lives we are in the hands of God, who chooses our place and orders our circumstances and is ready to make all things work together for our good. Our part in all this is the acceptance of God's will for our lives, as that will is made known to us day by day. If we thus acquiesce in the divine way for us we shall fulfill the divine purpose.

It is the highest honor that could be conferred upon us to occupy such a place in the thought of God. We cannot doubt that his way for us is better than ours, since he is infinitely wiser than we are. It may be painful and hard, but in the pain and the hardness there is blessing.

One is called apart from active life and shut up in a sick room. It seems to him that his time is being wasted. There are many things that need to be done and which he might have done instead of lying there with folded hands in his darkened room. People to whom his life is a continual blessing miss him when he comes not. He seems in his illness to be leaving a great blank where there ought to have been many good deeds and gentle ministries. Besides this loss to others and to the work of the world, sickness is most costly to the sick man himself. Its money cost is great. Then, its burden of suffering is great.

What is there to compensate for all this loss and cost to make the long illness really a blessing? Is there anything? If we were directing the affairs of our own lives, we would not put the sickness in; is it possible that God's way is better than ours would have been?

Of course we may not claim to know all the reasons there are in the divine mind for the pains and sufferings that come into our lives, or what God's design is for us in these trials. Without discovering any reason at all, we may still trust God who loves us with an infinite love and whose wisdom also is infinite. But we can think of some ways in which it is possible for

blessing and good to come out of a sick-room experience.

The Master has other work for us besides what we do in our common occupations. We have other lessons to learn besides those we get from books and friends and current events and through life's ordinary experiences. There is a work to be done in us, in our own hearts and lives, which is even more important than anything assigned to us in the scheme of the world's activities. There are lessons which we can learn much better in the quiet, shaded sick-room than outside, in the glare of the streets and amid the clamor of earth's strifes. Our shut-in days need never be lost days. Whatever they may cost us in money or in suffering, we need not be poorer when they are over than if we had been busy all the while at the world's tasks.

We need only to accept God's way and go as he leads and at the end we shall find that in not the smallest matter have we ever been unwisely led, but that at every step he has brought us to some good. We do not know what the future, even the nearest hour of the future, may have for us, but we know that we cannot drift beyond our Father's love and care, and that all that may occur dark or disastrous will reveal joy and blessing at the end.

"Yesterday, when I said, Thy will be done,
I knew not what that will of Thine would be,
What clouds would gather black across my sun,
What storm and desolation waited me;
I knew Thy love would give me what was best,
And I am glad I could not know the rest.

"Thy will be done, I say, and to the scroll
Of unread years consenting set my name;
Day after day their pages will unroll
In shining words that prove Thy love the same,
Until my years are gathered into one
Eternal, sanctified,
Thy will be done."

THE CONSOLIDATION OF OUR BENEVOLENCES.—III.

Bishop John M. Walden.

Will the boards provided for the proposed plan of consolidation (1) effectively cover the whole field occupied by the present agencies? (2) Do the work as efficiently or more efficiently? (3) Do it as economically, or more economically? (4) Insure as complete a presentation of every cause as is now practicable, or one more complete? These questions were arranged in this order to bring the more important one last; but having considered the first two, it now seems better to pass to the fourth before taking up the matter of economy. The time has come when we must reach the most effective presentation of our benevolent causes to our people, the members and adherents of our church. We have had a masterful system. When the General conference, then comprising only preachers, recognized the duty of each pastor to preach on the subject of missions at least once a year and to receive the contributions of the people to this cause, an effective method of education, vital to the church, was inaugurated. Its healthful influence on the life of the church can never be measured.

The adaptation of this method to its purpose has the strongest evidence in the fact that it has been adopted to further and support other movements demanded by the widening work of the church. Dr. Durbin influenced the church as did no other missionary officer, but the achievement through which he is most widely felt to-day is the plan for organizing the Sunday-schools into missionary societies. Lax as the execution of that plan may have been, and may still be, in places, its educational results cannot be computed. Our Methodist press has also had its potential place in the masterful system, which, as is seen, had its initial in the missionary movement, or was a part of it. Whatever details may be involved in the practical working, there are but two fundamentals: (1) The systematic instruction of the people in regard to the benevolent causes; (2) The systematic collection of their gifts to these causes. Here is all that is needed to guide in determining, as far as may be in advance, the possible and probable results of the proposed consolidation as to the maintenance and extension of our organized benevolent work.

Our masterful system has been losing in effectiveness somewhat as our benevolent societies have increased in number. It provides for a sermon on each of the causes cared for by these societies or a full presentation of each. The readers know how far this is done in their respective churches and whether the objection about "too many collections" is not also held against

these special sermons when each claim is presented separately, and whether the system is being paralyzed either by casual presentations or by "omnibusing" the collections, and also whether such departure from our disciplinary plans is attributable to the sentiment of the people or the interposition of the office-bearers or the course of the pastor. It is a gratifying fact that this departure is not general, but it is alarming that the trend in this direction seems to be increasing. The proposed consolidation assumes that our existing benevolent work can be grouped into three causes—foreign missions, home missions and education—and that three-quarters of the conference year can be allotted to these causes, one quarter for each, leaving the other quarter for the presentation of the conference claimants' cause—in all, one general cause for each quarter of the conference year. (The order of the presentation may, perhaps, be best determined by each annual conference for itself.) What would be the probable result of presenting within each quarter one of four general causes as compared with what now obtains?

An obvious result would be more time in which to work the methods for interesting the people in each particular subject. Should consolidation be adopted it would not be long, in this resourceful era, until thought would be directed to devising plans for improving the new and larger opportunities. Details, important in their bearing, may be passed that more general facts may be here considered. While in the command to the church to evangelize the world there is no distinction between foreign and home mission work, yet the fields are so diverse that it is not possible to place their respective claims fully and hence forcefully before the people in the one sermon now required by the Discipline. The most faithful endeavor to do this can, at best, only render a partial and limited service to either field. The extent, diversity and importance of each of these fields demands for each as much attention as they both receive under the existing desultory order.

The importance of foreign mission work has been steadily increased by the accelerating progress in the older fields and the marked opening of new fields; each field, old or new, differing from all the others in the traits and conditions of its religiously benighted people. This importance has been further increased through the changes which are being wrought among the heathen peoples by the aggressions of the great colonizing nations and the enterprises of the great commercial nations.