

## Our Young People

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### THE C. E. TOPIC—Oct. 23.

HOW CAN WE ENLARGE AND IMPROVE OUR WORK?

Matt. 21: 17-22; Isa. 54: 2.

BY AMOS R. WELLS.

There is a story of a farmer who had a great, rugged "harvest hand." A visitor to the farm was looking at this laborer and remarked, "That fellow ought to be chock full of work."

"He is," drily answered the farmer, "because I've never been able to get any out of him."

A large number of Christians are like that farm laborer—with splendid possibilities, but limited realizations. It isn't how big you are that counts, but how much you do with your bigness—or your littleness. How many times I have planned out some Christian work that I could do—I knew I could—and gone on quite satisfied, as if I had done it. But God was not satisfied!

A large number of Christians, too, are fiercely active about their worldly business, and make that an excuse for not doing work for the church. As the wise Frenchman, Amiel, wrote in his journal, "Activity is only beautiful when it is holy; that is to say, when it is spent in the service of that which passeth not away." Tried by this test how much of our work is beautiful and how much is ugly?

Of course, I do not mean that only church work is holy and beautiful. All work is holy when it is done for God, and no work—not even church work—is holy when it is done for one's self.

Many think that they cannot work for God, as if working for him requires greater ability than to work for one's self. Really, it requires much less, for God helps us when we try to work for him, but he does not help us when we only try to work for ourselves. As Miss Havergal once wrote: "If any work is really God's giving, and he puts it either into our hearts to devise or into the power of our hands to do, no fear but he will also provide stuff sufficient, whether metal or mental."

Obey, then, the Master!  
The furnace is steady,  
The bruised metal ready;  
Striks, welding it faster!

If we have this ideal of work for Christ, that it is our main business in life and that he is ready to help us in it, then we shall always be trying to better our Christian work. We shall paint away eagerly on our life canvas, because the Great Artist is in the next

room, and comes in every hour to look over our shoulder.

Let us examine our Christian Endeavor work. Are we putting our best thought into our preparation for the prayer-meetings? Is our committee work done with loving thoroughness? Are we looking out all the time for new work we may do "for Christ and the church?" If we are, never fear but we shall find it.

Let us lay down a programme with one feature in it, just one new thing we will do for the Master. Then, having done it, let us add one more task, and so on, joyfully and endlessly. For is not Christ, joyfully and endlessly, doing new and larger things for us?

### The Prayer-Meeting Committee and the Prayer-Meeting.

(Paper read at the Y. P. League).

Of all lines of Christian Endeavor work, I think the prayer-meeting is the best, as it is there we get food for our inner man, the food upon which, if we feed, we shall grow in grace and in fuller knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The prayer-meeting, then, is the place where we get strength to carry on our daily life, and if we neglect this means of grace, we will be apt to fail.

Now in regard to the prayer-meeting itself, let me say that it should be free from ruts, viz., we want more variety in our meetings, do not always sing the same hymns, and do the same things in the same way, but vary the routine; for instance, we might have a memory meeting, and the leader give out the hymns, and all sing them by memory. Then have the leader commit some portion of God's Word to memory, and recite the passage instead of reading it. Or we might have a "Favorite Text" or "Promise" meeting, each member reciting a promise or text that has been specially helpful to him or her. Then there might be a pledge meeting, and the leader and others take some part of the pledge and talk on it.

Another good way to make a change is to pass a few slips or paragraphs on the pledge around to the members to read at stated periods. There may be other variations to the meeting, such as consecration meetings, Bible readings, or Bible character sketches, viz., the leader might take a Bible character such as Ruth, Peter or Paul, and give a short address on their life and work. Timothy, as a Christian Endeavorer, would be a good subject on which to express one's ideas. But I have said enough about prayer-meeting topics now to come back to the prayer-meeting itself. I have said it should be free from ruts; it also may have other features which will do much to benefit to those who attend.

First, it should open and close sharp on time, and, above all things, not be allowed to drag. There is nothing so detrimental to a meeting as long pauses, and it should be the duty of all Endeavorers to hold themselves in readiness to fill in the breach whenever they occur in the meeting. In fact there might be a pause committee appointed in adjunct with the prayer-meeting committee. In the prayer-meeting, the prayers should be short, and the talks also short and to the point; and it would be well for those who read verses to have a little testimony to give at the end of the verse,—to tell why the verse is specially applicable to their case. Another thing especially beneficial to the meeting is for the leader and every

participant to speak distinctly. So much good is lost to those who are sitting towards the other end of the room by not hearing all that the members have to say.

Some Endeavorers find difficulty in knowing just when they are speaking loud enough, and not too loud. It is better of the two to speak too loud than not loud enough. A good rule is the elocutionist's—"Speak to the people who are farthest away from you." If you have those in mind, and those only, you will speak loud enough for all to hear, and yet not so loud as to be disagreeable. Many leaders are skilled in the use of chalk and pencil, and it would be very helpful if such leaders could be persuaded to give a lesson on the black-board. Important truths can be fixed in this way upon the memory.

Few things will help a prayer-meeting more than the habit of standing while taking part in the meeting, whether to pray or testify. Every one, especially after a little practice, can think better on their feet. Then in regard to hymns, those that are in the form of prayers should be sung with bowed heads.

There are many other points on prayer-meeting work that might be given, but I must close this part of the paper. Let me say, however, before leaving, that one of the most important times for good work for "Christ and the church" is after the close of the prayer-meeting, and much of the spiritual effect of our Christian Endeavor meetings is lost in the light and frivolous talk into which the prayer-meeting attendants are likely to fall after the close of the meeting. Conscientious members of the prayer-meeting committee may effect a reform if they will but distribute themselves throughout the room and earnestly strive to keep the after meeting conversation blessedly in line with the theme of the meeting. Why is it we are so hesitant to talk with one another about religious truths anyway?

A great help to the prayer-meeting is the prayer-meeting committee. This committee should consist of five members and be well organized. It would be well to have a chairman, a vice-chairman and a secretary. The vice to take charge of the committee when the chairman was absent, and the secretary to keep the minutes of the committee meetings, prepare the report, and notify the members when a meeting of that committee is going to be held. Though the chairman has charge of every meeting, yet it would be well for the committee to meet and appoint one of its members to have a special oversight of each meeting. That is, one member for one night, and another member for the next, and so on; so that if for any reason the leader fails to appear, the prayer-meeting helper for that evening should be prepared to lead, and should take the chair at the appointed time of opening.

A good plan for deepening the spiritual interest in the meeting is to hold a ten-minute prayer service preceding the Christian Endeavor meeting. This service should be held by the prayer-meeting committee, and the leader for that evening.

Every Christian Endeavor Society should subscribe for some good paper with the Christian Endeavor topics in it, and notes on the same. I may say, in the Fredericton Society, we subscribe for the *Christian Endeavor World*. It comes to the chairman of the prayer-meeting committee; and a few weeks before the member chosen has to lead, he or she is presented with the paper

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in which is the topic they have to talk upon.

Praise is an important part of the duty of all members of this committee. Because if an Endeavorer's words please you, if their prayer inspires you, or their singing uplifts you, tell them so. It should not be flattery which ruins, but appreciation which helps those who give and those who receive it.

Especially should praise be given to young or weak members and inexperienced leaders, for such members, as a rule, think their first meeting a failure. The chairman of this committee might hold cottage meetings from time to time, which I am sure would result in much good, and sometimes win those who are opposed to young people's work.

Last of all, the prayer-meeting committee should be a praying committee, "taking everything to God in prayer," and so, in consecration with all the other committees, work to the end that souls may be saved and brought in touch with the Master. Thus they will be made workers in the Master's vineyard to go out and win others.

"Let us do with our might what our hands find to do," so that at last, when we come to lay our burdens down, it can be said of each of us, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

J. BARRY ALLAN.

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Some men console themselves and flatter themselves that they are very good, very right, and very safe because they have never done anything very bad. They overlook the fact that much of our trouble comes from the things which we have left undone. Our sense of guilt is not so keen and sharp when we neglect our duty as it is when we fall into actual transgression. But sins of omission involve the soul in actual guilt and condemnation.