Address

No 58

Subject
"Our religious work – How can we
attract the largest number of
unconverted young men"

58

LADIES and GENTLEMAN.

"Our religious work - How can we attract the largest number of unconverted young men?" is the subject assigned to me for this evening.

As I was meditating upon the problem presented my eye fell on the following item;

~~Mayor Hewitt on the Moral Needs of New York.~~

The Church Club held its first annual dinner in New York ~~on the night of June 5th at the Lee House.~~ Everett P. Wheeler presided, with Bishop Potter on his right and Mayor Hewitt on his left. In Mr. Wheeler's introductory speech he stated the aim of the club to be to develop an organization of laymen of all denominations to assist the efforts of clergymen in reaching the masses of the people.

The Mayor was warmly greeted when he arose to speak about "The City of New York." He said:

"I confess that the city of New York needs every possible agency to develop its moral resources. People have grown sullen. They have an idea that no one in power is just toward the great mass. The increase of wealth has separated widely the rich and the poor. When I was a young man I knew every workman in my employ, and I was the confidant of each one's troubles. Now, out of the 2,000 or 3,000 men I employ I know scarcely twenty.

"The most touching experience of my official life has been the complaints made to me by poor people who don't know where to turn, and it is a great pain to me that I can do little but point out my own lack of power to help them. We are all brothers—we must find that out sooner or later—and if we ignore that fact now we must not complain if our indifference brings about a revolution. This club, if it follow out its aims, may be the beginning of a movement which will avert such a catastrophe and induce a better order of things."

So says the late Mayor ~~Hewitt~~. Bretheren; The Young Mens Christian Association has ~~a similar~~ substantially the same object - an object not only to assist clergymen but all faithful workers in reaching the masses of young men.

If it reaches the young men, all the young men, in time its mission has become well nigh universal. The Mayor ~~of New York~~ in the item read gives us a hint. "They the people have an idea that no one in power is just toward the great mass."

LADIES and Gentleman.

Christian Societies like ours afford an antidote to such injustice wherever it may exist. The Young Mens Association has been, is and will be not omly just but generous toward all that will put in their lot with them for mutual benefit. It is not a charity in the ordinary sense of that word; but it is this: alone, an upright young man has little strength to get good and resist evil. Associated with another he is strengthened both to get good and to resist evil. Four so bound together for offensive and defensive operations making common cause are powerful for the same purpose. The essential power to which I refer is more than doubled for the two; more than quadrupled for the four. Enlarge such an association and equip it with reading-rooms, gymnasium, and night-schools, permeate these means with all the manliness, cheerfulness and faithfulness of genuine christians, and then estimate if you can the good enveloped therein,- or the good, like the jets of a sparkling fountain, that will go out therefrom. Christian young men will if they understand it join such an organization. Upright youths who have gone out from christian homes if they are invited soon enough will come into it. The invitation should be extended before drinking friends have tempted a lonely heart which is thirsting for home-sympathy and companionship; before Satan has shown such a one a seemingly brighter beacon than God's word; and apparently happier place than the church of Christ; before he has been lured into Sabbath desecration as is so prevalent at this day in Sunday excursions attended with drinking, horseracing, ball-playing and other questionable amusements; for the Sabbath

before the intense ~~an~~ and ever deceiving passion for gambling has been excited in him; before the brothel has seized him and utterly defiled his moral nature. In brief let the young men who love the Master ,few though they be, be banded together for all proper purposes, for the right, for mutual help, for the developement of healthful bodies, and healthful souls; let them be governed by Christs last injunction;"Go". Go out. Go everywhere. Go at all times. Penetrate the places where young men, especially the more youthful when away from their homes, are to be found. Go to hotels, depots, stores, workshops, market-places, parks, wharves, steamers and ships. Put up the placards, distribute the tickets and cards of welcome. Speak the kindly and judicious words:"Come brother, come friend, come neighbor, come with us and we will ~~be with~~ do you good".

The late Mayor of New York affords us another glimpse into the causes which hinder young men from being reached. He says:"The increase of wealth has separated widely the rich and the poor ***** when I was a young man he I knew every workman in my employ, and I was the confidant of each ones troubles. Now, out of the 2000 or 3000 men I employ, I know scarcely twenty. " The very statement of the case shows Mr.Hewitt's kindly feeling; and quickly in the light of christian thought he presents first a sad picture and then gives some remedial touches.

Behold the picture: "The most touching experience of my official life has been the complaints made to me by poor people who dont know where to turn,

before the brothel has seized him

and it is a great pain to me that I can do little but point out my own lack of power to help them".

Now behold the remedial touches: "We are all brothers. We must find that out sooner or later,- and if we ignore that fact now, we must not complain if our indifference brings about a revolution". Tell us what is the procuring cause of such alienation of men? What is it that causes, as Mayor Hewitt declares, the rich and the poor to so separate themselves from each-other? It is because ordinarily both are selfish; because the one who is rich in the Scripture sense of the term is not a generous, faithful steward of the Lord. He is already worth thousands, perhaps, but is not satisfied. He lays his plans so as to make a still larger fortune, and does not care from whom it is drawn. You notice a slight manipulation of the market; then a number of failures. His stocks go up or go down, it matters little which, for he is at the helm. He makes his money and laughs at those who in their investments have made mistakes. The losers cry out with pain,-their families are often plunged into penury and distress; but the selfish man cares little for this . Money flows into his strong box and in his day and generation his power and influence can hardly be estimated. How wise was our Lord when he said of such: 'How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of Heaven!' Now, why? Because that kind of rich man, such as I have described, is selfish, and selfishness, however you refine it, is repellant. Pray, to whom is such a man a brother? Surely not to his employees-no not even to Croesus, not to Dives; for nothing

delights him so much as to contend with and outstrip these his rivals. True, he provides for his own family, -yes, so far as mere possessions are concerned, but the rule is, a distribution of selfishness ~~which~~ grows in the distribution. It shows itself in display or arrogance, pride or disipation. Modesty, kindliness, humility and temperance seldom grow from that stock.

In my judgement, it is fruitage like this which causes separation, which shuts up mens' hearts and opens their mouths with bitterness. The poor man who lives within a stones'-throw of that rich man, or who witnesses the apparent prosperity of his children, has himself a wife and children. He earns by hard, hard toil enough to keep starvation from the door but can gather little more. He struggles on bearing heavy burdens especially in times of sickness. If he is not a Christian, as many such neighbors are not, envy is apt to creep into his soul; his brow lowers, and his words become unkind. He and his wife and his children say among themselves complainingly, "Why this difference? It is unjust." They will not go to the rich man's church, though probably he, himself, seldom or never goes there. They cannot go into his society, so that day by day their feelings make the gulf wider and wider. So poverty, such poverty, which is not lightened by the true riches, becomes more and more selfish and such selfishness, however you may excuse it, is also repellant.

But why should good men, Godly men, true followers of Christ, rich men who are generous stewards, and poor men who are without envy, why should these draw apart? Indeed they do not. George Peabody devoted his large means

to the establishment of good schools distributed to the most needy parts of our land. His name is loved. Wm.E Dodge often put his shoulder to the wheel in the interest of humanity, and showed uniformly a brotherly love for all whom he could reach with his beneficence. He delighted in aiding young men to get a start in life, to become independent and useful.

Many students for the ministry, for missionary fields and for missionary fields have owed their education to him. His children and his children's children with large means are already following his bright example, so that in many parts of the world, are those who love and bless his memory. Hundreds of such prosperous men, and you have them around you, are living to day, who, by lawful trade, banking, railway investments or other praiseworty business, have become wealthy. Riches, like those of Abraham, have increased, yet have they not set their hearts upon them, but on the contrary have felt an increase of responsability to God and to their fellow men. They seem to say to themselves how can we use these gifts so as to show ourselves brothers to men and children of the Highest? They have sought out and found right ways, and men have loved them and do honor them or their memories. The way, then to break down this barrier and remove this separation between men whether rich or poor is simple and plain, it is to remove the selfishness. How can this be done? We say. By bringing both to Christ and entreating Him to remove not the wealth, and not, at first, perhaps, the poverty but every selfish inclination. But, dear bretheren, you ask doubtingly, do you expect that such a revolution can be accomplished in human society?

Must there not be a breaking up of present conditions by war, riot, murder, arson, boycotting, coerion, robberies, unholy combinations, ~~syndicates~~, ~~divorces~~, ~~suicides~~ or the use of other violent processes? No these are not essential. ~~Yes~~ I believe ~~such~~ this a revolution practicable, and that time ~~will~~ may effect it.

Let us see. Let three bretheren most consecrated to the Master's servic in every church, Catholic, Greek and Protestant, throughout the world, meet in their own churches, or each party in some room by themselves; let them consult & pray together till they agree, and wait before the Lord Christ till he shall have ~~embued~~ endued them with His own power, as he did to his disciples at Jerusalem. Then let them take this Christ-spirit with them, first into their own churche's praying circle, and there pray and labor and wait till the Spirit shall come in power. Then, let ~~the~~ them combine, two and two, as in the days of our Lord, agreeing together for the help & the salvation of all with whom they come in contact, for the conversion of all they can reach by loving kindness, judicious conduct by word, by prayer, or epistle. And let this work be the important concern; not to neglect business, but to carry Christ's strong spirit right there into their business. Should this course be followed faithfully rich men wuold soon begin to pass over to God's stewardship; poor men would find unexpected capital; atheists would be ashamed of their emptiness and turn their faces from the blackness of darkness to the sweet light of eternal day; infidels and skeptics would soon find extraordinary proofs of the truth of Holy Writ; the pursuers of mere pleasure would discover ~~the~~ their infatuation and be induced to change the seeming for the real; and even the apathetic learn to conquor their indifference, and to taste

something of the sweets of generous, loving kindness .

Now To solve our problem, i.e. to attract or win to Christ the largest number of young men, the prescription is precisely the same as for the churches. It is always By such effort put Christ, the real existing Lord-Christ who converts, who regenerates, who lifts up, who enlightenes, who fills the soul with salvation ~~-the real actual Christ~~, through the help of His Spirit, in importance first above buildings, rooms, libraries, evening classes, lectures, gymnasium, above the body, above the intellect, above all mere culture and ~~above~~ all mere methods of doing, thus recognizing Him as the Head; and the Salvation which he lived, died, rose again and ascended to heaven to secure as the first great work to be done, -the first pearl to be secured, -the first genuine revolution of soul to be effected. Every Christian knows that such work as this is thoroughly practicable; it is only the old story retold. Your efforts here in Brooklyn ~~in California~~ have been put forth with faith and vigor; but it is your privilege by the means we are discussing to strengthen and multiply them. The fewness of our numbers, the fewness of men in the churches indicates a gigantic work yet to be done in our country ~~in California~~ where there are Scriptural rich men, envious poor men and hosts of the indifferent; where there are confessed atheists, infidels, skeptics and heathen; where there are multitudes who appear to think that there is nothing to be striven for beyond the pleasures of sense, and where there is so much apathy that the Sabbath is not sacred, and places of questionable resort are thronged. Yes where more than here ~~in California, a State~~ in these cosmopolitan cities to which young men are coming in increasing numbers ~~numbers~~.

should workers for young men reconsecrate themselves, unite together, study the Word, pray and wait for power from on high; and then go forth full of Christ's sunlight, two and two, into the highways and hedges or into the places where young men may be generously met and helped! But one objects and avers, that zealous, persistent Christian spirits are not liked. I answer that they are liked when the Master's gentleness, dignity, loving kindness, self abnegation and magnificent ability goes with them, when true wisdom and discretion shall possess them. [Illustration] Christ, himself, sent forth men of like passions as ourselves, when He said; 'Go ye therefore and teach all Nations'; and better still: 'Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.' And are not these words for us? With such a command and such a promised presence and help, what, dear bretheren, may we not accomplish? We will take courage and go forward.