

**SOCIAL-TO SAVE, A BOOK OF  
SUGGESTIONS FOR THE SOCIAL  
COMMITTEES OF CHRISTIAN  
ENDEAVOR SOCIETIES, AND FOR  
THE HOME CIRCLE**

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# SOCIAL—TO SAVE

## A Book of Suggestions

FOR THE

*SOCIAL COMMITTEES OF CHRISTIAN EN-  
DEAVOR SOCIETIES AND FOR  
THE HOME CIRCLE*

BY

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ETC.

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UNITED SOCIETY OF CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR

[1895]  
E. R.

## SOCIAL — TO SAVE.

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A COMPANY of men and women were shipwrecked on an island. Death stared them in the face,— death from the hungry waves that lashed the shore, death from the hunger that lashed their fainting bodies. Wild beasts were prowling through the gloomy woods behind them, and a cold night was settling down. What did they do? The captain urged them to get together, build a fire, organize two bands, one to hunt for food while the other made a stockade for safety, and then, around the fire, safe in the stockade, the entire company would eat and drink and praise God together.

But they did none of these things. Said one, "I am too busy; don't you see I have set my stakes for a house?" Said another, "I am too bashful to go into company." Said a third, "The ship's crew are dreadfully coarse men, and really the party would better be more select." Said a fourth, "I am too tired; it will do me more good to sleep." "But it is for life," urged the captain; "for life and safety." Nevertheless, he urged in vain.

### A True Picture.

You know that no such scene as this was ever on earth? Would you were right! For indeed I have only pictured to you in a figure precisely what is hap-

pening every month in thousands of our Christian churches. Shipwrecked companies are we, cast up on these strange shores of time out of the vast ocean of eternity, with death and that ocean impatiently awaiting us, and hunger at our hearts, and the night coming down, and the beasts in the woods. And our Captain urges us, for life, for safety, to live for one another; to gather around the same camp fire; to give the reassuring pressure of the hand and clasp of arm about the neck; to drive away by love the wild beast of loneliness, and by friendly merriment the ghost of gloom. "Be social—to save," cries our Captain. But we have no time. And we are too bashful. And we abhor disagreeable people. And we want our own set. And it does not come easy. And we are too tired with our day's work. And there will be enough without us.

O, Endeavorers, when I think of that wide, mysterious sea upon which I must soon embark alone, alone — till "I shall meet my Pilot face to face," I do not want to set sail from a lonely hut while my brothers are wandering in the forest, I do not want to put forth from a silent shore into the silent sea. I want the banks to be thronged with people clasping hands, and I want a great, glad shout to speed me onward: "Good bye, brother! Only a day or two, and we shall all be with you again!"

#### "Social" Defined.

What is it to be social? It is to appreciate the meaning of life. It is to realize that we are set here



in this world, not for houses, lands, gold, silks, praise, authority, fame, but for character. It is to put first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness.

Gold separates men. They sneak off, each to his own gulch, jealous lest some one else should preempt a valuable claim before he does. Ambition separates men. My brother and I cannot both hold the office at the same time, and therefore — well, "Heaven helps him that helps himself." (Some think that is in the Bible!) Spite of trusts and combines, of clubs and cliques, the god of this world is a god of division, of isolation, and it is only as men get into their souls the love of God and the thought of his eternity and theirs, that permanently and truly they draw nigh to one another.

#### How to be Winsome.

I want to emphasize this truth, because failure to understand it is at the bottom of all our social failures, in the Christian Endeavor society and everywhere else. Do you want to be social? Do you desire the charm of winsomeness, that will draw men and women to you, as bees to the sweetest of flowers, as eyes to the loveliest sunrise? The secret of it does not lie in small talk, or jokes, or animal spirits. You do not need beauty, or wit, or learning. A dancing master cannot give it to you, nor a professor of etiquette. The secret of loveliness is the love of Christ. The secret of winsomeness is the desire to win souls for the Master. You cannot be social until you are social — to save.



Do not mistake sparkle for sociability. The iceberg sparkles. Do not mistake movement and animation for sociability. The ice cold waves that fret the coast of Labrador are full of most impetuous life, but they encrust everything with icicles. You may make a great stir about socials in your Christian Endeavor society, but unless the warm heart of Christ is in them, your socials will be more like the water of Labrador than the water of life.

#### **Good — Better.**

Etiquette is good, but Christ is better. Unless, to win souls to Christ, you are willing to transgress the laws of etiquette, — to speak without an introduction, for instance, — you cannot be social. Good manners are good, but Christ is better. Unless, to win souls to Christ, you are willing to meet uncultured people, clownish people, disagreeable people, you cannot be social. Industry is good, and the desire to get on in the world, but Christ is better. Unless, to win souls to him, you are willing to take time from your business, and get on a little less rapidly in your studies, your bank account, your reputation-building, you cannot be social. A knowledge of one's self is good, but Christ is better. Unless, to win men to the Master, you are willing at least to try to forget self, to lose self-consciousness in service, you cannot be social.

#### **A Recipe.**

The spirit of snobbishness will kill the socials of any society. Christ would not be admitted today

into certain circles of so-called Christians, if he came in the working clothes of a carpenter. Good socials must be democratic, and the washerwoman's daughter and ashman's son must be made to feel as much at home as the daughter of Senator Biggun or the son of General Moneybags. Egotism, the feeling that you are better than other people, either on account of a better filled purse, or because of a better filled head, or because of some other gift of fortune or industry, will destroy any social, — does kill every social that is dead at all. Put in place of this contemptible spirit the humble acknowledgment of sinfulness and unworthiness, and the glad perception that all for whom Christ died are brothers and sisters in him, and you will have, you cannot help having, successful socials. I do not much care what games you play or whether you play at all; what refreshments you serve, or whether you let the over-burdened stomach alone and serve none at all; sociability does not consist in forms and trappings, but in the spirit. Forget yourselves; remember Christ; seek to win friends for him: that is my recipe for a good social. *Forget yourselves; remember Christ; seek to win souls for him.*

What a farce is a Christian Endeavor society that is not social! A *society* not *social*, — what a contradiction in terms! Some are not societies at all, but *separieties*, — mere collections of self-centred ones. And this society of ours is an *Endeavor* society, — endeavoring, at any rate, to be social. Moreover, it is a *Christian* Endeavor society, — trying to be so-

cial after the pattern of Christ, after the fearless, brotherly, loving pattern of Christ. And it is a *Young People's* Christian Endeavor society, and so should be free from the class distinctions, the caste spirit, the artificial barriers, that obtain out in the world, but that have not yet parted young Christians from one another, and, please God, never shall.

#### **Saving Souls.**

How can we expect to save souls except by being social? Our lips are not eloquent to preach or plead, nor our hands skilled to push the pen along lines of power. We cannot preach Christ, but we can smile Christ. We cannot argue men into the kingdom, but we can sympathize them in, we can love them in. Are you a hermit Christian? Do you belong to a hermit Christian Endeavor society? There is a little mollusk that bores its way into limestone, makes a cell, enlarges it as itself grows, and speedily manufactures its own tomb, becoming many times too large to get through the narrow opening by which it bored its way in. Precisely this is the folly of every Christian and of every Christian Endeavor society that is not social, that does not go out into the highways and hedges, throw loving arms around the ugly, the stupid, the ragged, the wretched, and compel them to come in.

#### **Know Thyself.**

Let alone a knowledge of Christ, and of Christ's children, how can we get a knowledge of ourselves unless we are social? You think you believe in the