

The Church Lyceum.*

THE Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States provides, that in connection with each of their congregations a Church Lyceum shall be organized for mental improvement and social intercourse. The volume under notice is designed to point out the advantages of such institutions, and the best methods for their management. With every religious awakening there comes an intellectual quickening. "A new heart seems almost to make new brain." It is wise for the Church to seek to guide and mould this quickened intellect. It is said that the Churches do not hold the young people. The Lyceum will help them to do so, and to draw within its influence many whom it could not otherwise reach. It will greatly help the individual members. It will cultivate a love of good reading, to the exclusion of that which is frivolous and pernicious, and will guide the inexperienced in the selection of good books. It will be of advantage to the Church, as training up more intelligent members and workers in the Sunday-school. It will cultivate the social relations, under religious influence, of the members, and change an assembly of comparative strangers into an assembly of friends. The Church has too long been telling its young people what they must not do. By this means it can tell them what to do. It will often brighten otherwise cheerless lives, and give direction to the energies of otherwise purposeless or frivolous minds.

The plan suggested is to adopt a course of reading in history, science, literature, and Bible topics, somewhat after the Chautauqua idea, but simpler and less extensive, such as any boy or girl from fourteen could follow. In connection with this should be weekly meetings for the purpose of reading essays on the subjects studied, and debates or free conversation, with music and elocutionary readings. For instance, there might be a Longfellow, Tennyson, or Shakespeare night, with an essay on the poet's life and

genius, and readings and songs from his works. Special classes in the languages, science or art, might be organized, and the Church made the centre of the intellectual and social life of its members, as well as of their spiritual life.

Our author asks, "Does the Lyceum prevent young people from being drawn into sin? Does it interest them, and prevent them wandering away from the Church? Does it attract other young people to the Church?" Experience has shown that it does—that it stimulates the intellect, guides and regulates the studies, leads to the diffusion of good books, saves the wasted hours, and makes the barren moments blossom into wisdom and beauty, and has led many to go through college and enter the Christian ministry. It has the endorsement of the Bishops and leading educators of the Church.

The last General Conference of our own Church, on the motion of the present writer, unanimously adopted the following resolution, which is quite in harmony with the Lyceum movement:—

"That this Conference strongly recommends the formation, wherever practicable, in connection with the congregations of our Church, of Mutual Improvement Societies, having for their object the promotion of the study of the words and works of God, and His Providential dealings with the race. And that this Conference further recommends, as a most valuable assistance in the promotion of this object, the adoption of some such approved and definite lines of reading and study, as shall at once cultivate the intellectual and moral powers, and promote friendly and social relations among the membership of our Church, and shall guard their public and private entertainments against frivolous and dissipating tendencies."

We hope that many of our Churches will adopt this recommendation. The volume above noted will be found full of invaluable suggestions to pastors or others willing to co-operate in this great work.

We have received from James Campbell & Son, of this city, specimen pages of their new series of "Royal Readers." The selections are generally of a high order of

* *The Church Lyceum: Its Organization and Management.* By the Rev. T. B. NEELY, M.A., pp. 216. New York: Phillips & Hunt. Toronto: Wm. Briggs. Price \$1.

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