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## CHILDREN AND CHURCH ATTENDANCE



ANY ministers are waking up to the fact that there is an alarming absence of children from the public services of the Church, and, better still, many are seeking to remedy the situation by inducing as far as possible the younger members of the family to attend at least the morning preaching service. Primarily the parents are the responsible persons for the formation of the church-going habit on the part of their children; but unless there is something more than imperative duty laid upon the children their presence in the House will be under protest, and an unwilling attendance is not desirable. The influence of the minister should supplement the leadership of the parents in not only bringing but in holding the children to the public preaching services. The personality of the preacher has much to do with the children's attendance and attention. His provision for them, if wisely made and intelligently adapted to their understandings and needs, will make the preaching service something else than a barely endurable hour of hardship to them. Children may be led but should rarely be driven to church, and when there should instinctively realize that they are part of the family of worshippers, having a place in the congregation as naturally and as properly as their parents.

While no one man's method will apply to all preachers, the experiences of those who have succeeded in holding children to their preaching services should be at least suggestive to others who are anxious to do similar good work in their ministry to the more juvenile members of the families under their pastoral care. We think that no one formal plan will be found equally appropriate to all cases, believing as we do that the minister himself is the all-important agent in securing and retaining the children. One man's method may not suit another man's mind; but all men should seek to adapt to their own cases and congregations those plans that commend themselves as best under a careful study of all the circumstances and persons involved.

The plan that the editor found most generally helpful in his own pastorate is outlined in his Junior League Handbook in the chapter devoted to the Pastor and the Juniors. There will be found the outline of the course he followed with slight local variations in several of his pastorates, and it is not very different from the general scheme of the Young Worshipers' League as introduced during the past year or two in a number of churches on both sides of the water. But while almost any man can outline some kind of a plan on paper, only the man behind the pulpit can make a success of any plan in the congregation he faces from week to week. On another page we

give the testimony of Rev. W. B. Smith, our minister at Hespeler, Ont., on the workings of the Young Worshipers' League in his congregation. Our recent visit at Hespeler pleased us in every way, and not the least pleasant impressions made on our mind were from the number of cheerful and apparently happy little folk we met there. The photographic group was, of course, not taken on Sunday; but, at our request, as many of the members of the League as could come out on Monday that we might secure the group. If not in just the same way, at least in the same spirit, hundreds of other ministers might do as Mr. Smith has done in encouraging the children to be regularly in attendance at the preaching services of the church. We commend most heartily every effort, either locally or connexionally, that helps this good cause along, and shall appreciate any other testimonies, experiences, suggestions, plans, from any of our ministers anywhere who are securing "the child in the midst."

### Planning for the New Year

The new League year has not so far advanced that those Executives which have not as yet made systematic provision for the coming months may not still do so. We take it for granted that the hundreds of new presidents, elected at the recent annual meetings, have at least in the majority of cases met their committees and arranged the work of the year in outline. It is well to be cautious rather than careless in the apportionment of members to the several committees. And when thus carefully constituted, the different departments should be kept busy. Idleness is a bane to committees as well as to individuals. The various vice-presidents will find abundant scope for their ability and enterprise in outlining an appropriate programme for their working groups. Let each one plan something bigger and better than has ever been undertaken before; let all vie with one another in healthy competition for the highest degree of excellence in work done; let pastor and president inspire all the officers and committees; and there will be no danger of decline of interest or of lack of workers. The Leagues that actually do something and keep planning to do still greater things are the ones that thrive and grow and make themselves a blessing to their members and helpful servants in ministering to the community. During the new year seek as never before to make your League a live centre of activity from which shall radiate influences that will stimulate every good phase of life in your neighborhood as well as discourage every tendency to evil. Make yourselves felt as agents for God in the construction of community as well as individual righteousness. Get in the sinners whenever and however you can, and build up the saints by