

Symposium.

The Church's Relation to the Young.

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We regard many of the existing societies as protests against omission and neglect on the part of the Church. This failure in duty to her most precious charge may be briefly told in the following necessary relations of God's people to the Church.

1. To God's covenant promise, how pregnant in riches it is! "I will be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee." Gen. xvii. 7; Acts ii. 39. Yet the wealth in this mine has not been drawn upon sufficiently. The promised Holy Spirit for our little ones, in our little ones, has not been fully looked for, pleaded for at God's throne, as He would have us plead. Faith has been lacking.

2. The "Church in the house," the family nurture has been deficient. (1) In setting forth Christ in daily living—the parents having His Spirit and ensphering their children in His love; (2) in treating the children as heirs of the kingdom, as the seed of God, as containing the germinal life of the Holy Spirit within them until there is clear evidence to the contrary. Why are those born into the Church, within God's covenant, containing presumptively the seed of life eternal, said to "unite with the Church," "join the Church," or to be "admitted" by baptism? Surely they are sealed because they belong to the Lord already. The treatment of the home and the Church, the practice of the day serves to drive the young away to the world.

3. The care and spiritual oversight are defective. In what respect? (1) In establishing contact between the family-life and the warm heart-life of Christ in the Church. The life in the Church does not reach the little ones, owing to imperfect conductors. Elders and church officers have not succeeded in reaching every young man and woman and caring for all baptized children. (2) The Session has not looked into each home in each district, noting the spiritual needs and seeking to interest all the young in the work of the Church. The same interest shown to the full member has not been manifested to the baptized member, nor has he been dealt with in loving discipline.

4. Sabbath ministrations. Until recently this has failed to reach the young as it ought to do. Sermons have been prepared, too frequently, only for adults. In feeding the sheep the lambs have been forgotten. But to-day, the Church is seeking to gain lost ground, and adapting her teaching even to the little ones. The "sermonette," the "special sermon" for children, the "course of evening sermons" to young people, or better than any—putting an illustration, or some portion into every sermon for the young—is followed, in many churches, with profit. But here, in our judgment, is where wrong is done to the young in preaching; they are urged to believe, called "lost sinners," "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel," because they have not decided public for Christ. Now, in many cases, these youth are not aliens; they love Christ in their hearts, pray secretly to God, wish to live nearer to Christ, cannot tell when love to Him began. They need guiding to Christ and decision for Him, not denunciation as sinners, nor pointing to the Spirit's work within them. We have found seventy per cent. of those admitted into the Church unable to tell when they began to love Christ. They possessed the germinal life of the Spirit from earliest infancy.

5. The practical Church work. The Sabbath-school is simply the Church at work in co-operation with her families in nurturing her youth. The co-operation needs strengthening by pastors and elders and soul winners. The school encourages, stimulates and fosters Bible study in the home. The family look to the school as an ally, while parents aid in home preparation, and attend with their children, when possible. Here is the Church's nursery, her gymnasium. Here she trains and gradu-

ates the young nurtured in her many families. Were this part of her work thoroughly performed, as in Wales, where we are told the entire Church teaches or is taught, where all work as "bees in a hive"—the many other societies of the day would not be necessary. The wise Church will utilize all means that God sends to gather in the lambs, to save the young men and women—to fit them for greater usefulness in the cause of Christ.

Personally we have found it to work well to ask each one, on his applying for full communion on profession of faith, what definite work he would engage in for Christ. In most instances, on seeing the work and its character, the young will enter heartily into it, and with some care and wisdom may be won for active service. It will be found that the young are willing, provided work can be given them, and encouragement in their first attempts. All societies for the young should be used as training agencies within the Church having as their sole aim and end the development of a strong, healthy, Christian manhood in the Lord.

Our Christian Endeavor Corner.

THE CLOSE OF THE YEAR.—With the close of the year comes memories of the past and visions of the future. With these thoughts in mind our last Endeavor prayer meeting for 1893 might well take the form of a brief retrospective and prospective glance by the President of the society, or some member intimately acquainted with the work. The topic passages suggested are Psalm cxv. 11-18; lxxiii. 23-25.

In Psalm cxv. 12, we have a note of praise for what God has been to us in the past, and a glad promise of what He will be in the future. Again in v. 16, we have man's place in the past and future very clearly indicated in the words, "The earth hath he given to the children of men." What have we done to make the world happier, better and brighter? What can we do to spread the glad news which will heal the broken-hearted, and set free the captive? These are pertinent questions at this season, may the Spirit of God help us to answer them humbly, honestly and faithfully, that the New Year may see great work to the glory of His name.

THE ANNUAL MEETING.—The Annual Meeting of the Toronto Union was most successful in every way. The body of Cooke's church was well filled by an audience of earnest and enthusiastic Endeavorers, splendidly representative of the movement in this city. The facts brought out by the various reports were most encouraging, and very pleasant news it was to many that a Presbyterian society, that of East church, had won the banner for the largest proportionate increase in membership. Our Methodist friends have held it for the last two years. Every Endeavorer should have heard the address by Rev. Mr. O. C. S. Wallace. He ably filled the place in the programme made vacant by the absence of the Rev. Mr. Rondthaler. The motive, emotion, and method of Christian Endeavor work was the subject of his address. The consecration service was led by Rev. Mr. Hyde, which closed the meeting, was most powerful and helpful. We all came away with renewed earnestness, faith and courage to expect and do great things during the coming year.

NEW YEAR TOPIC.—Beginnings, John i. 1-17. This is our topic for the first service of 1894, and a most appropriate one it is. The beginning of a New Year, should mean the beginning of a new effort for Christ and the Church. If Christian Endeavor has been standing for Christian Ease in your society; see to it that during 1894, the E stands for Earnest Endeavor. Consecration should be the thought pervading this meeting. Consecration from its two points of view—ours and God's; ours, "Lord what wilt Thou have me to do?" God's, "What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?" May we all make great progress heavenward during 1894.