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The Students and the Church.

(To the Editor of the Journal) :—

FOR some time past we have been hearing a great deal, at home and abroad, about the relationship of the University to the Presbyterian Church; few, however, seem to realize that here at Queen's there is another great problem, of perhaps no less importance, namely, the relationship of the students of the University to the various branches of the Christian Church in the city of Kingston. To state it in a word,—on a very moderate estimate there must be upwards of forty-five per cent of the students who do not attend with any regularity the church services in the city. Church attendance, from one point of view, is largely a matter of habit; it should not hastily be inferred that there is any real breach between this large percentage of the students and the church. But it is true that the age at which most young men and women come up to the University is probably the most formative period of their lives and a habit formed then is very likely to be the habit of their later years. Thus it follows that there are at Queen's some five hundred students, most of whom come from homes where church attendance is the regular custom, who while at the University contract a habit that will very probably keep them outside the church, or, at least, very half-heartedly within it, the rest of their lives. If this is true, and careful observation within and away from the University has led the writer to believe that it is, then the problem is surely one of the first magnitude, both from the point of view of the University and of the Church.

There is a variety of reasons that might be offered in explanation of the facts of the case. The intellectual change of outlook upon the doctrines and practices of the Christian Church is a common accompaniment of the other intellectual gains that a university affords. The freedom from all feelings of responsibility towards any particular congregation during the four years' residence in the city is not unnatural. Even of the students who do attend their church with fair regularity, few feel themselves very closely attached to the congregation,—they regard themselves and, for the most part, are regarded merely as transients or visitors. Another reason which many of the students would doubtless offer is that they do not regard the ordinary church service as a real rest after a week of lectures and books. It is not true, however, that the College Sunday afternoon service, the Y.M.C.A., the various Bible classes and other student organizations of like interests are accepted as valid substitutes for the services in the city churches; for the students who attend these are for the most part those who also attend their own church with fair regularity. But whatever be the reason or reasons advanced