

Young People's Societies.

THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE'S "PLAN OF STUDY."

CONDUCTED BY REV. R. D. FRASER, CONVENER.

The Monthly Topics for 1897 consist of a General Survey, and are adapted to all the various sorts of young people's societies. The second weekly meeting of the month is to be devoted to them; and attention is drawn to the fact that a specially prepared Topic Card for Presbyterian Y.P.S.C.E's. is for sale by the *Endeavor Herald Co.*, Toronto, at 60c. per hundred. It is issued by arrangement with the Assembly's Committee, and embraces the Monthly Topics of the Plan of Study.

Topic for week beginning March 14th.

FOUNDATION WORK.

John Knox and His Times.

Gen. 12 : 1-9 ; Heb. 11 : 8-10.

LITERATURE.

The Literature on Knox is very abundant. The Committee have selected the following as sufficient for the purpose :—

McCrie's "John Knox;" G. Barnett Smith's "John Knox and the Scottish Reformation;" Taylor Innes' book on Knox, each 50c.; "John Knox" in "Memoirs of Mighty Men" series, 3c.

"McCrie" is the standard history, full, and exceedingly readable. Barnett Smith's book is a good attempt to popularize the story and is illustrated, as is also the little booklet, a chatty account of the great hero, in the "Memoirs of Mighty Men." Taylor Innes is the latest writer and is deeply interesting. With much skill he seeks to display the underlying principles of Knox's life and work.

POINTS FOR PAPERS OR ADDRESSES.

Scotland as Knox found it.
Scotland as Knox left it.
Knox's forerunners.
Knox as a priest and tutor.
Knox in the castle of St. Andrew's, and his call to the ministry.
The Galley Slave.
Knox in England.
Knox and his women friends—Taylor Innes, Chap. III.
Knox in Geneva with Calvin.
The Lords of the Congregation.
The First General Assembly.
The First Book of Discipline.
Knox as a Preacher.
Knox and Education.
Knox and Queen Mary.
His last days and death.
His influence upon our Church and our day.

Any four or five of these topics briefly treated will be sufficient to ensure a profitable meeting. Material will be found in the paragraphs given below and the admirable article of Rev. W. G. Jordan, and more in detail in the books recommended.

The outline of the life of the great Reformer may be obtained from any good Cyclopaedia. A description of St. Giles, Holyrood, John Knox's House, the Castle at St. Andrew's, would be very appropriate.

I. KNOX'S PERSONAL APPEARANCE.

In a letter addressed in 1579—seven years after Knox's death—to Beza, by Peter Young, the tutor of James VI., the personal appearance of him "who never feared the face of man"—as the Regent Morton said—is thus described :—

"In stature he was slightly under the middle height, of well-knit and graceful figure, with shoulders somewhat broad, longish fingers, head of moderate size, hair black, complexion somewhat dark, and general appearance not unpleasing. In his stern and severe countenance there was a natural dignity and majesty, not without a certain grace, and in anger there was an air of command on his brow. Under a somewhat narrow forehead his brows stood out in a slight ridge on his ruddy and slightly swelling cheeks, so that his eyes seemed to retreat into his head. The color of his eyes was bluish gray, their glance keen and animated. His face was rather long, his nose of more than ordinary length, the mouth large, the lips full, the upper a little thicker than the lower, his beard black mingled with gray, a span and a half long, and moderately thick."—Rev. T. Fenwick.

II. KNOX IN THE PULPIT.

Randolph writes of him to Cecil : "The voice of that one man is able to put more life in us in one hour, than five hundred trumpets blustering in our ears."

The student, James Melville, thus describes him when an aged and broken man in the pulpit at St. Andrew's :—"I had my pen and my little book and took away such things as I could comprehend. In the opening of his text he was moderate for the space of half an hour, but when he entered to application he made me so to grow and tremble that I could not hold a pen to write. In St. Andrew's he was very weak. I saw him every day in his doctrine go hulkie and fear (hooley and fairly, gently and with caution), with a furring of martins about his neck, a staff in the one hand, and gude, godlie Richard Ballender holding up the other oxters, from the Abbey to the Parish Kirk; and by the same Richard and another servant lifted up to the pulpit where he behooved to lean at his first entry; but ere he had done his sermon he was sae active and vigorous that he was like to ding the pulpit in blads and flie out of it."