

Section of Social Service

"Look Up, Lift Up."

The Pastor and Youth

(In his recent splendid book "The Preacher Pastor," Bishop William A. Quale, has the following suggestive chapter on this important subject.—Ed.)

Whether at any point of ministerial application of effort there is less comprehension of the interests involved may well be doubted. If many pastors do understand the validity of the claims of youth upon their thought and love and sympathy, many do not; and if the preacher does, the body of the members of the Church do not. We shall hear much talk of the young man and his problems. But youth is a wiser word than the young man, and a wider word too.

The Church has an apostolate not less to young womanhood than to young manhood. The Church is not feminine gender, neither is it masculine gender. It is epicene, as the grammarians would say. We do misapprehend the issue involved in world redemption when we talk persistently about the young man or about the boy as we would if we talked all the while about the young woman or the girl. Christianity is not so ill advised as this, though not a few of its votaries are. To hear the average temperance orator, woman or man, pronounce, you would think that the temperance cause was a man's cause only.

"We must save the boys" is the conclusive proclamation; whereas the temperance question is as snaring to women as to men. Drunkenness and lewdness, which is its twin, are assassins of women and men alike, girl and boy alike. Society in many quarters is given to drink with the women folk as certainly and disastrously as with the men. Drunkenness is no respecter of sex. It knows no chivalry. Liquor will make a woman reel and babble in love songs and sayings as certainly as it will a man. Liquor will coarsen a woman as certainly as it will a man.

The propaganda of temperance is as decidedly a feminine question as it is a masculine question, and that not because the men are to marry the women, and on the helpless women are to be thrown the ignominy and the penny which, dog-like, tramp at the heels of intemperance, but because the women are learning to drink socially; and their nervous organization being more finely poised than a man's, they are thus more easily jangled and so deranged toward better things. Temperance has the interests of a race at heart and in its plans, and the Church has the race at heart, and the race is man and woman, forever man and woman.

The youth of the Church is a wide phrase. Young men and young women planned for humanity and God is the intent of the phrase.

THE PERIOD OF DANGER.

Science has in recent years discovered with much sounding of cymbals that the period of youth is the period of danger and the period of help made more readily possible. It is good they have found this out, and it is a valuable pedagogical information; but any preacher could have told them that ages ago. That is an old thing under the Christian sun. The scientists are belated on matters not a few. The Christian Church has known this all along. The importance of the

child was discovered and revealed by Jesus, and the housing of youth and the holding of youth for the Christ and for the Church are an adage of the Church and have been long. "Train up a child in the way he should go" was the high road then and is the high road now to sobriety of life and unswerving usefulness of behavior.

So many Church members are unjust to youth. Their attitude, if it were to be characterized as hostile, would not be far amiss. They have no patience with the young. They seem never to have been young themselves, or else to have forgotten how it felt. Youth is a time of dreams, and in consequence a time of danger. Dreams make for danger as they make for safety. The youth, girl or boy, is feeling for the wings each soul is to wear. Where will those wings bear this youth? Is the subtle fear that leaps to speech in thoughtful minds and should shape itself to deeds.

MEMBERS AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN TOUCH.

A pastor should study to bring his members into close touch with the young people. The young people—whether the feeling be justifiable by the fact or not is not now material, seeing the feeling exists—feel that the older people are not sympathetic with them, that they are tolerated rather than regarded. Let each pastor know that this is how the young folks do feel, whether they ever so phrase their feelings or not. Many times the accusation is unjust, many times it is just; but in any case there is a great guilt food, and a great guilt must be moved bodily. It has no business to exist.

Let the wise pastor interest his brainiest and most cultured members in glad fellowship with the young. Let him put the newly married folk on their guard against the selfishness of love, which so easily ousts all former friendships and is satisfied with the home and the wonder of married love and devotion. Such happy hearts must not forget their associates.

And the membership must have the continuous stimulative pastoral suggestion that they mix with the young; that they be not lookers-on, but participants; that youth is a hard time of life; for it is trying the most difficult of difficulties—namely, to find itself and its centre of gravity and its vocation. Youth needs sympathy. It will not ask it. Youth as a rule does not know it needs it or wants it, but it does. Laughter needs another laughing voice as sincerely as weeping needs another voice of tears.

Hearts close and tender—how they will help! "Snug up to pursuing troop." Is the advice of the wise pastor to his folks and is the wise advice to a pastor for himself. Stay near where danger lurks, where menaces are thick, where the struggle of the world, the flesh, and the devil, which is very real and tragically real, is pressing like a pursuing troop. Youth for God. That is the world's safety. Everybody not an atheist knows that. To start with God and stay with God—what a shelter from temptation!

PLAY PROVIDED FOR BY GOD.

It may well be the pastoral endeavor to reduce his points of antagonism to the lowest possible point consistent with the soul and body interests of the young

whom he seeks to save and retain saved. It is never wise to rasp at anything. It is specially not wise to fulminate at everything in sight—the baseball game, the football game, the nickelodeon. There are in all these ingredients of danger, but in themselves they are not bad.

Amusement is virtuous and is necessary. Play is provided for by our God in the nature of His creation. Cats are not the only things that like to frisk. I have sometimes wished that the logic of play be seen in puppies and cats and bears and lions and bables when playing with their toes might penetrate the thick cuticle of some I have known to whom life was so grim that a wintry landscape was a rather enlivening scene compared with life as they conceived it. Play is good! Only bad play is wrong.

Get young people to know once for all that the preacher is a friend to fun and play, that he likes giggling himself, that sport is a delight to him, that games are things he has not forgotten the attractiveness of; then when he does find fault with certain types of pleasure, they will heed his words as knowing that they came not from the heart of a censor, but from the heart of a man.

It often does a preacher more good to go out and play ball with his young folks or run races with them or cut up "didos" with them than to ask them to prayer meeting, for the palpable reason that after such sense of frolic with him they will feel that where he invites them is worthy of their regard.

The catalogue of evils is not so long, after all, if we give the matter scrutiny. To get a sense of the eternal rightnesses—that is the main business; and having a sense of the eternal rightnesses, to have a settled determination for conscience' sake to do that righteousness thing—what a strong thing is that and how it compasses us about with deliverance!

We as ministers are to bring youth fronting the great decision and the great strength and the great service which are all spelled in one word, hallowed a proper name is the word; it is spelled "Jesus."

Religion is not so much a cutting off as it is receiving and applying. Tell such things with a glad voice to such as come to church two by two, two by two. Talk of love as a worthy and desirable estate. Do not just sit it. Love is very real and very regal to all whose lives are touched thereby.

A STRONG MAN'S TASK.

To save young men or women is a strong man's task. These are the unmade makers of the world. They need care and sympathy and wide wisdom, but mainly love. "He loves us." Let every preacher struggle to have that impression regarding his people, that youth is heaven on the city where he dwells.

Boys have legs and like to kick. Why should preachers perpetually kick at football when every boy not a candidate for anaemia is bound to tumble in that glorious heap of heads and heels? Why is that bad? And youth is manhood likes that too. It has legs, and the rush, the audacity, the strength to resist, and the strength necessary for impact, all appeal to strength. "My son, be strong," was the word of a man one time—a man who loved athletics and who said, "I keep my body under."

Glory in youth and with youth. Get a natural leadership with them from your definite, human power of control. We cannot soul people into the kingdom of God, though some seem to be very certain we can. We can't, and we ought not. And youth do not need bettering at forever, but lifting and showing them the sky into which they are lifted.

"The torch we hold up for others illuminates our own path."