

our country, where there is no definite organism? The whole question as to more careful oversight of our Sabbath School work is to be brought before the General Assembly in Halifax and it is to be hoped that some definite action will thus be taken, not only to prevent the leakages which we find in the schools already existing, but also to extend this agency which is so essential to the stability and progress of our Church. Our Church was never better equipped for service than she is to-day. Her spirit has never been so aggressive. Let us see that she does not fail in her efforts to provide for the spiritual instruction of the young. If she fails in this it will be the foreshadowing of failure at every other point.

Toronto

Wherein Have We Failed?

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The Reports on Young People's Societies which are coming in to me at the present time from Presbyteries throughout the Church, indicate a serious decline in number of societies, membership and practical work. One Presbytery calls it "galloping consumption."

The majority of the Presbyteries feel that there is a real loss in interest, that Christ and the Church are not holding the attention of our young people, or drawing out their effort either in work or study, as at one time we had hoped. In many congregations Christian Endeavor Societies are disbanding or dwindling to a vanishing point, and nothing is taking their place.

Some of the causes alleged to have been discovered for this apparent exhaustion of the movement are:—Sessions and older people do not take the interest they should in the young people and their work; not sufficient practical work to enlist and keep the interest; lack of steadfastness, not due to constitution and methods, but to love for the possessions and pleasures of this present world in the hearts of the young

people; desire to be entertained rather than to give thought and study to the Word of God and the work of Christ.

As to the remedy, we must get behind Young People's Societies, if we would touch the root of the matter. The beginning of better things must be with parents and teachers, who, of all others, have most to do with shaping the character and tastes of our young people. Interests awakened, tastes formed, habits acquired in home and school, will abide, and their results be manifest for good or evil in Young People's Societies, Missionary Associations, Managing Boards and Sessions.

Now, the first step toward improvement in home and school, as elsewhere, is to find out what we lack, where we fail.

(1) I believe we fail to impress upon the young the supreme importance of the things of God and of eternity. When the working-man father or the business-man father, or any other father, pleads lack of time for not spending ten minutes morning and evening, or even once a day, in reading the Scripture and prayer; when the mother toils early and late to feed and clothe the bodies of her children and make them presentable in good society, but has not one half-hour a day to teach them the law of God and the love of Christ; when the conversation in the home seldom turns upon the Kingdom of Christ or the missionary work of the Church; when there is time for business, time for pleasure, time for newspapers, time for novels, time for eating and drinking, time for visiting and receiving visitors, but no time for prayer and study of the Bible; is it any wonder that children have wrought into their very being the feeling that things seen and material are essential, and that religion is a quite secondary matter?

It is useless to quote such texts as "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness," if from their tenderest years we surround the children with a home environment all but completely secularized, and set before them a life in which, if Christ have a place, it certainly is not the throne. Children are too keen observers, not to see where the