

a heart-gladdening kind. The wholesome and helpful influences of our Sabbath Schools, and Young People's Societies, are invariably spoken of in terms of highest commendation, and the value of their work gladly conceded. As other Committees will deal with these important elements of Church Life and Work, and present their conditions and doings to the Assembly, this Committee needs but to touch lightly on those points that are most vitally related to the spiritual life of our people.

The Sessions were asked in what ways the Sabbath Schools and Young People's Societies have been helpful during the past year in bringing the young to Christ, and in quickening the spiritual life of the congregation. Your Committee thought that by putting the question in this form, Sessions, in answering it, would be compelled to reflect carefully on Sunday School and Christian Endeavor work in all its bearings and influences. At all events it was not prepared for the charge of heresy implied in the *Kingston* report. After giving a long and precious list of good things accomplished by these agencies—a list of the very things we deem "helpful" both in bringing the young to Christ and in increasing their loyalty to Him—the report adds: "The end, however, of such institutions seems, according to the question, to be something different and higher, namely to bring to Christ, and in one reply we seem to have the exact answer desired—'A few from the Sabbath School have become Christians and joined the Church.'

Such questions and answers are greatly to be regretted, for they, perhaps unintentionally, but none the less really, establish a doctrine regarding the relation of our children to Christ which both the Scriptures and the Standards of our Church repudiate." Your Committee finds in this passage "some things hard to be understood," for surely it cannot mean that the glorious work of "bringing the young to Christ" is so alien to the scope and functions of our Sabbath school workers, that even to ask if they have been "helpful" in doing so, is to incur the charge of "establishing" a heresy. Except for the word "few" in the condemned answer above, we should regard it as worthy to be written in letters of gold. The goal before every true Sunday school teacher is Christ for all

his unconverted pupils, and greater likeness to Christ for all the rest. And as soon as they "become Christians" the duty of a public confession should be wisely and tenderly urged.

The noble work done by these agencies, and especially by the Sunday schools, is attested by a great cloud of witnesses.

*Truro* says: "The young in this way become better acquainted with the Word of God and the Plan of Salvation; most of those received into the full communion of the Church come from their ranks."

The Presbytery of *Lanark* and *Renfrew*, in its summing up of those "helpful ways," may be regarded as fittingly voicing the conclusions of not less than forty other Presbyteries: "The ways in which Sabbath schools and Young People's Societies have been most helpful may be summed up under the following heads—faithful and systematic study of God's Word; deepening sense of responsibility; personal dealing; exerting influence in inducing others to attend service; the cultivation of the missionary spirit; visiting the sick; friendliness to strangers; pastors have been greatly helped; the spiritual life of the congregation increased; while many through these agencies have been turned to a more serious view of things."

*Guelph* Sessions speak warmly of "personal dealing" and unite in thanking God "for the interest the Sabbath school teachers, and members of our Young People's Societies have shown in such hand-to-hand work."

There is practically a unanimity of sentiment in Presbyterian reports when speaking of Sabbath schools. With regard to the Christian Endeavor, the praise bestowed, though generally profuse and cordial, is not invariably so. A *Paris* Session says: "We have not found our Young People's Society so helpful during the past year as the Bible Classes we held, the system of Bible study in it is not edifying." One or two others speak cautiously or doubtfully of the Christian Endeavor, but the vast majority represent its work as specially helpful and inspiring."

The Spiritual life of the Church depends upon that of each congregation, and that again upon the condition of each individual, so that the practical question is a personal one.