

YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR WORK.

BY REV. R. S. BETH, WINNIPEG.

The importance of the work amongst the young people in all our congregations cannot be too strongly emphasized. This is emphatically the age of the young people, and woe be to the Church that is forgetful of the fact.

Some think they are too aggressive, but he who thus thinks mistakes the spirit of his own times. "Old men for counsel and young men for war" is not a foolish saying; and while we give the palm for ripened wisdom and experience to those whose heads are white with the unmelting snows, we recognize the fact that a peculiarly strenuous age affords special opportunities to the young.

If we count time by heart-throbs, rather than by figures on a dial, he whose heart is throbbing in keeping with the tremendous movements of to-day, may have as much packed into his life at twenty-five, as came upon his grandsire at three score.

The Church ought to recognize this fact, and avail itself to the full of the splendid power that can do so much for the Church and State if rightly utilized; and they may do such incalculable damage to both if it is neglected.

That the Church has been divinely guided in this matter is evident to all those who study the Spiritual movements of the last quarter century. During that time the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor has had its inception and marvellous growth, till to-day it girdles the earth with a new zone of power, as nearly three millions of the best blood and brain in all countries have banded together to win the world for Christ. It may be safely said that tried by the test of Gamaliel, the wisest lawyer of the old Jewish court, this young people's movement is of God and not of man.

It is probable that the Christian Endeavor movement will not maintain all the extraordinary manifestations of enthusiasm which characterized it during the earlier years of its history. It is as well that it should be so. The emotional is an important part of our nature but it is not all of it, and it is good to know that the Young Peoples Societies are recognizing the fact of being able to do solid work without highly-wrought conventions, and even without sunrise prayer-meetings at hours when "sleep that knits up the ravelled sleeve of care" might be much more helpful and more conducive to conditions for fruitful energy.

It is well to understand that the religion of Christ is at its best when it dares a climax of the

commonplace and shows how those who at times have soared as eagles, or have run with the first outburst of a new life, may also walk the treadmill round of duty and not faint.

As evidencing the degree in which the Young People's movement is recognized by competent authority as a permanency in our church life, it is interesting to notice that during the past year the *British Weekly*, one of the leading journals of social and Christian progress over the sea has given every week special columns of its valuable space to the work. For these columns such writers as Prof. Marcus Dods, Dr. John Watson, Campbell of Brighton, and other noted men, have been secured as regular contributors on the topics. Our own church papers in Canada are giving special attention to the same subject.

In our Church *Record*, a regular department is allotted for articles from leading writers month by month on the Young People's Topics.

In this connection it is thought wise to call attention again to the special Topic card prepared by the General Assembly's Committee on the subject of "our own Church, its doctrine, polity, history, and work." This is in harmony with the genius of Christian Endeavor, which was never intended to be an undenominational society but was designed to knit the young people closer to their own particular church.

The Topic card includes a special study of the Shorter Catechism which all of us who have tried it consider one of the most interesting and helpful exercises of the meeting. The various schemes of the Church are studied in all their bearings, and the lives of missionaries and other great leaders in the work are followed with much interest and profit.

On the card for the coming year, in addition to the points already noticed, the Hymnology of the Church, with the lives of some of the great hymn writers, finds a place. This also is an important matter, since music is a child of religion, and every great revival of religion since the days of Hezekiah has been accompanied by a revival of music and the production of some of the great hymns of the Church.

One fails sometimes to understand why some good people cannot see how that, out of the travail of souls under conviction of sin, some of our greatest hymns have been born, and that out of the blessedness of ripe Christian experience words and music sprang into being that in some senses could not be expected anywhere save on this side of the cross of Christ. It is hoped that this Topic Card will be very generally adopted throughout our church.