

is quite distinct from signing the constitution or roll of members. The latter relates to our duties to the government of the local society as such ; but the pledge is a crystallization of the principles for which the whole "movement" stands, and commits the members to the performance of definite personal duties "for Christ and His Church."

The pledge or obligation is in some form essential and fundamental in all organizations, whether secular or religious. Not one of the many benevolent orders exists without it. It is assumed or required of every member of a Christian Church. Indeed, it is impossible to become a Christian without a consecration to God, and just as impossible to live a true Christian life without a definite devotion to His service, either of which is the taking of a pledge. A pledge is simply the outward expression of an inward promise, and in the case of our Christian Endeavor or Epworth League pledge, it is the visible manifestation of a vow that must, or ought to have been made in the heart to God. Our pledge is neither a work of supererogation nor extra-judicial to Christian duties ; it is of the nature of sacrament. The *sacramentum* was the Roman soldier's oath of allegiance. In the forming of a new legion, the ceremony was performed by collecting in an upturned shield, a few drops of blood drawn from a gash in the arm of the captain and each soldier by his own sword. Then the captain, holding the shield aloft, dipped his hand into the blood, and each soldier passing by in turn dipped in his hand with the captain's. By this "Covenant of Blood" they became a blood-brotherhood, by which their hearts and lives were as one, symbolized by the mingled blood. They thus swore fealty to each other, the captain to the soldier, and the soldiers to the captain, even to the death. By this solemn rite of blood covenanting they entered into a common life, which partook of the spirit and purpose of the commander. This is the design of the Christian sacraments, with the Old Testament idea of a covenant added, which was a conditional pledge between parties, whether the contractors were God and man, or man and man. A meal was taken, a tree planted, a gift made, a heap of stones gathered, a sacrifice offered, or a stone set up for a pillar, as a symbolic witness of