

## Symposium.

### How to get Young People Interested in Church Work.

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LET them be assured of genuine sincerity on the part of those who are members of the church. Specially let this be manifest on the part of all members of the family who are members of the Church, in dealing with religious life and religious matters in the house at home. David said, "I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way. O when wilt thou come unto me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart," and Paul says "Learn first to show piety at home."

How ready young people are to detect anything like insincerity in religious profession. And if they have the least occasion to suspect that religion is only used as a mask, how little value they will set upon it.

Create the impression in the home that religion is only for the Church, or for the Sabbath, with a special dressing up for the communion season, and young people will soon begin to question its reality or its utility. Let all interested in this far-reaching question, offer the prayer "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation: and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways: and sinners shall be converted unto thee."

Conversion must be the first aim. The Master says to all who have not given themselves to Him, "Come:"—that is the first duty—the marrow of the Gospel is in that one word,—and then, when a soul has truly come and found rest in Christ, just as surely He says to that soul "Go." "Son, go, work to-day in my vineyard."

Sonship implies obedience; and my experience leads me to say, that in dealing with young people earnestly and alone, in view of sitting down at the communion table, and when satisfied as to the propriety of recommending them to the session, I have almost invariably asked, whether, if accepted, and their names put down on the communion roll they would be willing to take up some department of Church work; with very rare exceptions this request has been readily acceded to. But just there comes the critical point: first to ascertain the line of work the candidate is best suited for, and next, the making sure that he or she is at once initiated to the work. Delay here is dangerous. The sooner the start is made the better. The longer it is delayed, the more difficult it will be to get a beginning made at all. Strike while the iron is hot, and give no rest till your young member is fairly in line with your other workers.

My desire has always been to get young men, on making a profession, to commence at once, in taking some part, however simple, in the prayer meetings. I believe that greater stress ought to be laid on this, both by parents and pastors than there usually is. Clearly, John taught his disciples how to pray; and we read, that, "as Christ was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples:" and the outcome of this request was the unparalleled model, the Lord's Prayer. How much this is overlooked both in the family and in the congregation. Without prayer, how much would you give for their work? But praying and working, like praying and watching, must ever go hand in hand if a blessing would be secured.

After a start has been made, it is easy for a beginner to get discouraged. How many did run well for a time? Hopes were bright, zeal was burning, the heart was warm with the flush of its first love, and the soul of the minister was made glad with hopeful expectancy. But, by and by effort flagged, zeal had burned itself out and the work by degrees given up. What was needed to prevent this? Oversight, constant oversight, and a kind word by way of recognition and encouragement.

Tholuck's motto holds specially good here. When asked

how he managed to succeed in keeping his hold so amazingly on such multitudes of young men, replied, "Seek, and follow." Seek to get them in and started; but follow them closely with your constant care, and follow them closely with your earnest prayers. Keep in touch with them. If absent, let them feel at once that they are missed. Every one likes to be noticed; and I believe also, everyone likes to be helpful. Where, for example, will you find more regular and enthusiastic attendance than on the part of a godly choir? Why? Largely, because they have been given something to do, and are made to feel that they are helpful and their efforts appreciated. Get some specific work for each one to do, keep an eye on the doing of it, speak words of encouragement to the workers; keep before them the Master's words, the Master's example, and the Master's promise of reward. "Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life," and by the blessing of God, some of the young people may be led to take an interest in Church work.

I believe, however, that the real solution reaches farther back than the pastorate. No minister baptized by the Spirit of God would think of making light of his great responsibility here. But the real commencement of interesting the young in Church work must be made in the family. "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." Upon whom primarily does this responsibility devolve? Is it not on the parent? "These words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house and upon thy gates."

This teaching diligently, and talking constantly by the parent about those things which God commanded, would very speedily—sealed by the Spirit—work a grand moral revolution. What hinders? What is the first thing needed in order to teach them diligently to the children? "These words, which I command thee this day shall be 'in thine heart.'" If the heart of the parent is "engaged to approach unto God," how natural and how easy to endeavour to lead the hearts of the children into the same happy relationship. Look at the closing verses of the Old Testament Scriptures. How directly they seem to point in this direction. "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."

How are we to get young people interested in the work of the Church? The first thing must be deep-seated, personal piety on the part of the parents, the engaged heart to approach unto God, as taught in the thirteenth chapter of Jeremiah; secondly, strict observance of family religion. "I will bring again the captivity of Jacob's tents, and have mercy on his dwelling places: and out of them shall proceed thanksgiving and the voice of them that make merry; and I will multiply them and they shall not be few; I will also glorify them, and they shall not be small." Thirdly, the Church quickened and beautified by the Holy Spirit, and the promise realized in its fullness.—"Their congregation shall be established before me, and I will punish all that oppress them: and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God. At the same time, saith the Lord, will I be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be my people." And when this blessed time has come, God's people, whether young or old cannot help taking an active interest in the work of God's Church.

"GENEVA," said Talleyrand, in intended scorn, but yet in unconscious eulogy of that Book which had formed the character and institutions of its people, "Geneva is a grain of musk which perfumes Europe," and to-day the nations which are leading the van of progress are those in which God's Word is most extensively read and pondered and obeyed by the people.—TAYLOR.