

# Young - Friends' - Review.

"NEGLECT NOT THE GIFT THAT IS IN THEE."

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## INSIGHT.

On the river of life, as I float along,  
I see with the spirit's sight,  
That many a noxious weed of wrong  
Has root in a seed of right.  
For evil is good that has gone astray,  
And sorrow is only blindness;  
And the world is always under the sway  
Of a changeless law of kindness.

The commonest error a truth can make,  
Is shouting its sweet voice hoarse,  
And sin is only the soul's mistake,  
In misdirecting its force.  
And love, the fairest of all fair things,  
That ever to man descended,  
Grows rank with nettles and poisonous things,  
Unless it is watched and tended.

There could not be anything better than this  
Old world in the way it began,  
And though some things have gone amiss  
From the great original plan;  
And however dark the skies may appear,  
And however souls may blunder,  
I tell you it all will work out clear,  
For good lies over and under.

—*Elta Wheeler Wilcox.*

## MY IDEA OF A CHURCH.

Read by A. L. Roberts, at the Young Friends' Association, held during Half-Yearly Meeting time, at Lincoln, Nebraska.

I know of no place or occasion more suitable than a Friends' meeting in which to tell just what I think, whether I am right or wrong, about churches and religion. These papers are open to the criticism of the house, and therefore I feel sure that my errors will be promptly corrected.

The subject I have chosen is momentous, and I suppose is in many ways unsuitable for me. It may seem absurd for one who has never been a church member, and who has so little experience to guide him, to suggest church reforms. But somewhat for that very reason, because I am influenced only by what seems to me reasonable and right, I have hoped

that my paper would, in a way, be all the more acceptable. And I present these views to you partly because I wish to find out myself what is right. I stand in the position not of one who knows, but of one who is trying to learn.

In the first place I wish to state wherein I think churches ordinarily fail to do the most good that it would be possible for them to do under different management, and then suggest what would seem to me to be the better way for a church to be managed. By this I do not mean that I wish to make an attack upon our churches, or upon those who manage them. I believe that church people, like other people, do as they are brought up to do, and that mistakes are usually made more from a lack of better light, or better education, than anything else. Therefore, it is not at all in the spirit of an attack that I would criticise church methods. My object is simply to tell wherein I, as an outsider, think I see room for improvement. I must add, however, that I do not know that any criticism or suggestion which I may make will apply to the Friends' church. I am hardly well enough acquainted with this church to know.

For a long time I have thought that religion was a matter of soul-education—a slow process, a gradual growing like our Creator, which could hardly reach perfection except after a long life well spent. For this reason it has seemed to me just as impossible for this religious perfection to be reached in a single night's revival as it would be for a person to grasp intellectually all knowledge in a single hour of mental excitement. That is, unless it was by a miracle, and the age of miracles seems to be past.