

Our Young People

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OUR TOPIC TALK.

May 3.—What does the parable of the Prodigal Son teach us? Luke 15: 11-32.

This parable teaches the truth of God's loving, fatherly relation to sinful men.

On the one hand is the wilful youth who breaks away from his father's guidance. Thus man sometimes separates himself from his Heavenly Father. There are various ways in which one may do this, but at the root of them all lies unwillingness to conform the life to God's will. The result is inevitable—days of careless separation, sooner or later, produces distress.

On the other hand is the father, honoring the dignity of his son's maturity and giving him all the privileges which, if rightfully used, would produce an honorable manhood. When the son wanders the father is unable to force repentance; but when once the son has become penitent, he grants a full pardon. So the Heavenly Father stands willing and anxious to receive his wandering children.

The restored condition was a happy one, yet how much better if the son had never wandered! The father might freely forgive, but he could never restore what had been lost by the past. The elder son's lot was much better, for he had received the father's blessings daily, though he seems not to have appreciated them. God's gracious pardon is a blessed gift, but nothing transcends the privilege of abiding close to him continually. S. J. C.

AN EASTER SERVICE.

This being the evening of Easter Monday, we had an appropriate programme, consisting of several readings describing the keeping of Easter in different countries, which were very interesting. There was also special music by the music committee, which was greatly appreciated.

A special collection was taken at this meeting, each member being requested to put his or her collection in an envelope with a verse of Scripture in considerable amount was thus realized.

Y. P. S. C. E.,
West St. John.

A person came to me once and told me that she had prayed for affliction. I replied: "Dear soul, do not be so foolish. You will have quite trouble enough without asking for it."—*Chris. H. Spurgeon.*

PRACTICAL PLANS AND SENSIBLE SUGGESTIONS.

(From the pages of the *C. E. World*).
FOR SOCIAL COMMITTEES.

II.

A Home Social.—The following plan for acquainting the new members with the other members of the society is being carried out by the social committee of the Calvary Baptist Endeavorers, Washington, D. C. The committee holds a meeting once in each month at the home of some one of its members. The first hour, from 7.30 to 8.30, is spent in the transaction of business, and the remainder of the evening is spent socially. Invitations are sent to the members who have come into the society during the month to join with us in our social hour. Merry games are indulged in and refreshments are served. We find this way a good one for making a stranger acquainted, as the formality which sometimes creeps into a social is never found in these home meetings. The members of the social committee, having thus come to know the new members, find it an easy thing to acquaint them with other members of the society, and the stranger feels himself no longer a stranger, and enters into the work feeling he is surrounded by friends.

FOR PRAYER-MEETING COMMITTEES.

Touch Up Your Leaders.—Rev. T. S. Weeks, of Fall River, Mass., sends us these capital suggestions: "A few days ago, as I was riding up French's Hill in the electric car, I saw a man driving four horses that were struggling with a heavy load of cotton on a huge dray. They were making progress with much difficulty, and the reason became apparent when we rode past the horses, for we found that the pole horses were doing all the work, while the traces were slack on the other pair.

"As we rode past, the motorman on the electric car shouted to the driver, 'Touch up your leaders,' and this gave me the theme on which I am writing. My purpose, however, is to tell you of a society in which the advice of the motorman is being followed with some profit to those who lead the prayer-meetings, and through these to all who attend them. The plan is to have the devotional or prayer-meeting committee appoint the leaders for at least a month at a time, and make their appointments two weeks before the month begins.

"Invite all the leaders for that month to meet with the devotional committee some evening for the study of the topics of the meetings they are to lead. We have found this to be of a special advantage to the younger members, and also to those that feel themselves unable to discuss a theme or present a subject in an effective and helpful manner. The aim is to assist the leaders to think closely, state concisely, and present effectively whatever may be intended as the topic for the time.

"We also try to get higher ideals as to the object and outcome of the prayer-meeting; to discuss methods, devise new and improved plans, discover what constitutes a 'good meeting,' and how it may be obtained. We do not fail to realize that the best preparation for a prayer-meeting is in prayer. We also seek to give to our leaders the fullest assurance that they have the sympathy and co-operation of the committee in the meeting, as we hold ourselves ready for any service at their call."

FOR LOOKOUT COMMITTEES.

Questions on the Pledge.—"I have heard," writes a Chicago Endeavorer, "of societies that are in the habit of

presenting to candidates for membership a series of questions on the pledge to test their understanding of it and their real purpose in joining the society. Please give me such a set of questions." Any society can make up its own, but the following questions will prove suggestive:

Why do you want to join the Christian Endeavor Society?

Why do you want to sign a pledge? What general promises do you make in the pledge regarding your Christian life?

In particular, what promises do you make in regard to your private devotions?

What promises do you make concerning your church?

What promises do you make about your Christian Endeavor work?

What are some excuses for failure to keep different parts of the pledge that you think Christ would accept?

What is the object of the consecration meeting?

What is the purpose of Christian Endeavor committee work?

Upon what do you rely for power to keep this pledge?

CORAL REEF ISLANDS.

"Don't forget your junior meeting this afternoon, son."

"Bother!" exclaimed Hugh, stopping short in a full tilt he was making for the front door. "I will just go off to practice ball with the fellows."

"Take the fellows to the missionary meeting with you."

Hugh shook his head. They won't go; Tom Knox says it is silly to think we shavers can do anything worth counting in such a big work; he says it's like throwing a pebble at old Jump Mountain expecting to upset it."

"Ask Tom if he ever heard of a famous pebble that flew from the hand of the shepherd lad," suggested Hugh's mother, but the boy went off, grumbling, before she had time to add the promise about how we might remove mountains. She knew Hugh would go to the meeting; he might grumble about it; he often did; but the sense of duty was strong in that young life; it beat in his pulse, with the blood of God-serving parents, for generations back.

Sure enough, when Mrs. Clark called the roll, Hugh answered to his name, and went up with his company to put his bit of silver in the money box. There were questions and answers about heathen lands and missionaries; psalms sung, verses read, and then the leader asked the boys to listen to this little story.

"I didn't make it up myself," she said; "it is a true story, and I got it of a Sabbath school paper."

"Once, long time ago, there were great, wide, empty places in the Pacific ocean, where no land was, and the great World-Builder said there must be islands planted there, for trees and plants, for birds and animals, for men and women.

"So he called to the tiny little creatures in the South Seas (men sometimes named them zoophytes, or coral insects), and said, 'I want you to build me seven islands; two here, two here, and three in another place; some may be large, others small; but they must all rise high enough above old Ocean's swell to let trees and plants grow on them, and animals live there, and presently men and women.'

"Oh! Master!" cried the little creatures, 'how can we build any thing great? That would be a work for the whales.'



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