

IF you mean to act nobly, and seek to know the best things which God hath put within the reach of men, you must fix your mind on that end, and not on what will happen to you because of it.—George Eliot.

The young people who read this paper certainly mean well. No person knowing them as the Editor does, would accuse them of a poor intent in their innermost desire, or of a low ideal in the main purpose of their lives. This is well, for to possess good wishes and to be among the first steps to realization are the first steps to the attainment of true nobility of character and action.

But wishing well or meaning well is not enough. To desire God's best things with an intensity strong enough to make one willing to pay God's price for them, is much more than to simply wish for the possession of them. Most young people would like to be good; but to resolve to have a good heart and to live a good life no matter what the cost may be is an altogether different matter. When real nobility of character becomes the end for which we immediately strive, there is sure to be some high price to pay. Goodness comes not easily to the most of us. Nobility is not entailed when character is being sought. Some folk are born to social distinction and to the possession of material riches; but a high place in the scale of manhood and the enrichment of the soul in imperishable spiritual treasure are possible only to those who are willing if need be to sacrifice everything for their possession.

To will to be good whatever the cost to self is a much stronger impelling power in the life of a young Christian than a mere wish that he were good. To be content with the latter is to settle gradually into a state of self-complacency that rather congratulates itself that one is at least no worse than one's neighbor. Not until we are resolved to be as good as we have ability to become, may we expect to rise above mediocrity of either character or practice. To know God's best things as fully as we have mental capacity to comprehend them; to realize God's highest ideals as completely as we have moral power to approximate them; to fulfil God's noblest purposes as far as we have strength to accomplish them—these, and nothing less, must constitute the end of all our endeavor. With a mind fixed on these we shall count as of little moment whatever may happen to us of personal discomfort or present loss as we press on to higher and nobler life, satisfied in all we do that the ultimate goal of all our prayer and effort shall bring to us infinite and imperishable gain.

Now, the spirit conflict-riven,
Wounded heart, and painful strife,
Afterward, the triumph given,
And the victor's crown of life.

International E. L. Convention

1914—BUFFALO—1914

It is not too early for you to take note of the above. The next International Epworth League Convention will be the Silver Anniversary, celebrating the 25th year of the League's life. Look out for further announcements; but mark it down in your mental note-book.—Buffalo, 1914.—The First Week of July.

The Annual Conferences and the Epworth League

W E have emphatically and repeatedly stated our conviction that our Epworth League merits a larger consideration and a more earnest and sympathetic oversight by our District and Annual Conferences than it usually receives, and that the League is given wise pastoral guidance it cannot flourish. Because of the present state of the work and its positive need of better pastoral oversight, a letter was sent from the General Office to every Chairman of District prior to the Annual District Meetings, and to every Annual Conference Epworth League Committee at the time of the meeting of the various Conferences.

Precisely what definite results may have accrued from these letters we do not fully know, for but few of them were even acknowledged. In our last issue we gave some items of moment as they were reported from a very few of our Districts.

The Reports of Annual Conference Epworth League Committees we have received only in part, and some of these are far from satisfactory. The Annual Conference Epworth League Committee presenting a report containing less than 160 words all told. Yet one such report, at least, is before me as I write.

This article is not written to find fault, remember; but it is becoming increasingly evident to your General Secretaries that all too few of our responsible leaders have the interests of the organized young people's work of our Church deeply at heart, and he does not hesitate to repeat what he has already said in various forms, that unless the ministry of Methodism, as a whole, wakes up to the importance, value, and immediate needs of our young people and their Societies, the Church will lose both in numbers, influence, and power. No person having the welfare of our youth truly at heart, and being personally concerned for the growth of the Kingdom of God, can look with equanimity upon the unconcern of so many of our young men and women in matters of spiritual and eternal moment, and be guiltless before God.

There are graver responsibilities resting upon us as a Church than many seem to have ever dreamed of, for the salvation and employment of the youth of our congregations. Such responsibility cannot be even faced, far less fully discharged, unless our representative District and Conference gatherings treat our Epworth League work fairly and consider its condition and prospects with the wisdom that some are doing this is cause for congratulation; that any should be recreant is equally cause for concern.

From the reports received, we glean the following important recommendations and pass them on as of general interest:

MONTREAL CONFERENCE.

This significant sentence occurs in the report: "We would reassure the Conference, however, that the Epworth League is still the parent young people's organization,—the first-born child of Methodism, and wherever its principles are faithfully tested it is calculated to produce at least as good results as in the twenty-four years of its history."

True! Substitutes for the Epworth League have been tried again and again, and have for the most part had a brief existence. Any Society lacking the essential principles of perpetuity such as are embodied in the Pledge and Departments of the Epworth League must necessarily

be but ephemeral at best. We fully coincide with the judgment of our Montreal brethren, and commend their implied advice—Give the Epworth League a fair trial by faithfully testing its principles before you adjudge it of no value to your youth.

This Conference wisely passed this item also:

"We urge in strong terms the marshalling into line of the District Leagues of the Conference. This is the key to the situation. The local League needs the *esprit de corps* of the District League to do its best work. The District League has a unique function in that it lends itself to the support of its own Missionary Institute, and, above all and over all, to the holding of the Annual Convention."

This is most important. The District Epworth League Executive Committee has a wonderful opportunity both in organization and development work. The District Convention is vital to this as well as to the successful working out of the missionary policy to which the Leagues of the District in their united capacity are committed. We desire for all our district League officers a conception and sense of the importance of their office that none of them be figureheads only. Our District work must not be allowed to suffer from lack of adequate supervision.

After passing complimentary references in appreciation of the General Secretarial staff, this Conference reached the innermost heart of Epworth League success when it passed this item:

"The pastors are solicited to lead the young forces in a Forward Movement in view of the twofold fact that on the one hand they are supported by such invaluable agencies, and on the other are confronted by such imperative needs."

The pastor is the key-man to the situation. The president is the chief executive officer. Between pastor and president there must be hearty accord and sympathetic co-operation. If the pastor fails to inspire the president, the latter cannot do best work. In this sense of inspiration to undertake great things, lies the mightiest force of leadership in the pastoral office. No intricate machinery can take its place, and if the pastor fails to lead his young people up into a clear atmosphere where they catch a glorious vision of opportunity, all the methods and plans that any General Board may devise, are powerless. Let the pastors lead. The young folk will follow.

HAMILTON CONFERENCE.

Right to this point of the pastor and the young, this Conference passed the following:

"That since the duty of the pastor and the Church toward the young is a paramount duty, he, together with the members of his local church, should make much larger use of the Junior League and kindred organizations, in order (a) to fulfil the obligations laid down in the Discipline (Article 75) re Catechumens (b) to provide and train material for the Senior League and for church membership; (c) also, where the Junior League is not reaching the older boys, to promote earnest pastoral and other effort to develop their splendid possibilities and bring them into vital relation to Christ and the Church through the Scout, or similar movements, that appeal to boy life." And again,—

"Since some Epworth Leagues fall through lack of personal pastoral oversight, we would urge upon every pastor