



PASTORS! Within the next few weeks you will be called upon to nominate your Sunday School Superintendents and Epworth League Presidents for the coming year. This is not a small or unimportant duty. It should not be done in a perfunctory way, simply to meet the requirements of the Discipline. Let the annual meeting of your Sunday School Committee of Management be treated as one of the most important gatherings of the whole church year. Study the weak places in the school and make provision to strengthen them. Set your "standards" with which you and your superintendents have all been supplied before your officers and teachers. Aim to realize it as nearly as possible. Let the incoming staff be installed in office with becoming ceremony. If your superintendent has been chosen by you after careful thought and earnest prayer his inauguration ought to be an occasion of public welcome. The same is true of your League President. To have charge of such great interests as are involved in the Sunday School or Epworth League is no light responsibility and your leading officers should come to their work with a due sense of its grave significance. Do not then allow the annual meeting of either School or League to pass as a mere matter of course. Give thought and prayer to it, for on your choice may depend great issues for both time and eternity. That the Divine Spirit may guide in the selection of all in official position should be our most sincere and earnest prayer from ocean to ocean.

TOWARDS the close of 1910 I sent a letter to the President of every Young People's Society whose name and address were reported on the circuit schedules of last year. At the same time I enclosed a printed form containing some questions, the answers to which were necessary to inform me as to the general state and progress of our work according to the new legislation of the General Conference of 1910. Up to the 1st of March some 550 societies had returned the report card, of these 200 had adopted the new pledge at the time of writing and many others were about to do so. About 100 had organized the citizenship department and many intended to do so soon. 407 follow the official topics weekly, 200 have regular business meetings, but only 100 have mission study classes. Evidently there is much room for improvement in this latter particular. The societies writing me are in every Conference of our church, the largest number, 113, being in the London Conference, the least, 1, in Newfoundland. These societies report a total membership of 22,018, of whom 6,338 are young men—a larger proportion than some persons would apparently expect. Our societies may not be doing all they should, but that the Epworth League is a living, active, useful agency in hundreds of places was never more evident than at this present time. When the official returns come in from all the circuits through the regular channels of district meeting and conference I hope to be able to give a fairly satisfactory report of the work as a whole. Meanwhile the General Board, which meets on the 15th inst., will have the above data on which to work. I regret that so many of my letters were

unanswered and the reports returned only in part.

THERE is an old Persian couplet which has been translated to read:
"O square thyself for use. A stone that may fit in the wall, is not left in the way."

The admonition is wise, even to Christian readers. Utility is the highest beauty. To be well "fit" for one's place, and so to add both strength and permanency to God's structure, should be our aim. For life needs us all. No life is useless unless it is useless, and that sad condition never exists save by the choice of the owner. Every life may be of value if the will so resolve. But those only are of actual practical use in the Divine building that yield themselves readily to be shaped according to God's design. In this none of us are like cold iron or stone, to be hewn or chiselled by some outside worker's strong hands. The work is within us; it must begin in our own hearts; it necessitates our consent and co-operation. God can fashion and use us only as we assent to His will and obediently yield ourselves to His supreme control. Thus He is able to do much with us as well as for us. Mark the prepositions. It is more important that God should be enabled to do something through me than merely work in me. The greatest permanent profit comes to us when we think supremely of God and make possible for God to accomplish through my agency in the fulfilment of His universal design. The question of questions for young Christians is not "What is God going to do for me?" but "What am I going to let God do through me?" Ponder this latter question well. If we treat it aright it will prompt us ever to seek a perfect fitness for use, and in such fitness we shall find the way to the possession of the richest boon possible to any human life on earth. A will to be so used of God will control desire, strengthen purpose, govern habit, regulate conduct and sustain activity as nothing else could possibly do. Lack of such a will may lead to the growth of a selfish conception of religion, centered in getting rather than using, and a dwarfed spiritual life shall inevitably result. The resolve to put one's self in God's hands for the highest usefulness is the one that should compel the Christian to real consecration and unselfish service.

THEY were wise words that Lord Lytton, in his stirring story of "Harold," caused the old Earl Godwin to speak to his son Tosig:
"Wise men may always make their own future and seize their own fates. Prudence, patience, labor, valor; these are the stars that rule the career of mortals." Many a man has bemoaned the environment into which "Fate" has placed him, and the hampering conditions under which he has had to press his way; and, moaning, has sunk down into helpless indifference and despair. Others, with a dauntless courage, have bravely conquered "Fate," and with intrepid spirit of determination have snatched victory from the very hands of defeat, when the batts seemed to press against them. After all, it is the spirit

of the man that is omnipotent, not "the stars that rule." One may easily conjecture the changed history of England had there been more men of Harold's stamp to greet the Norman; but again is shown the superior power of personality when an attempt is made to analyze the secret of William's career of conquest. The man is supreme. Strong men will always be the nation's greatest defence, and constitute its inexhaustible treasury of priceless wealth. A youth, lacking the characteristics enumerated by the brave old Saxon earl, can never hope to rise to pre-eminence among his fellows, no matter what else he may possess; but he who acquires these same qualities and practices them habitually will not long be uninfluential or unknown. Having such determination to win in the inevitable struggles of life, no one need be afraid. He may seem to fail and yet be a signal example of success.

PERHAPS the explanation of failure, in many cases, may be found in another of Lytton's suggestive statements: "What we want, if we have talent, it is purpose; not the power to achieve, but the will to labor." Given the will it would seem that to none can the way be long denied. Medium talents linked to a heart of well-directed energy will accomplish immeasurably more than great gifts that are supreme overmastering purpose. The record of human achievement in all spheres of activity verify Lord Lytton's words. In every realm of life men have accomplished what seemed impossible because they have grimly persevered when all odds seemed against them. In spite of many opposing forces their indomitable will-power has conquered. In invention, discovery, exploration, conquest, it has ever been the story of sustained effort by strong-willed men rather than the record of easy success. Happenings that are written within the mighty deeds they have performed and of which we read with breathless interest. And even so in the church's history. The triumphs of Christianity have been won by men of strong convictions, uncompromising principles, dauntless courage and unflinching devotion to the truth. They had "the will to labor," and though the labor was hard and the conditions often unpropitious, they reaped glorious harvests for their Lord. The call for such men will never cease. The church must have this type of whole-souled worker in increasing numbers if she is to do as her Lord requires, and the Sunday Schools and Epworth Leagues must raise such brave and vallant spirits to carry on His high emprise to glorious completion. Are you training workers?

SPRINGTIME with its beauties and sure promise of revitalized nature is with us once again. The storm blasts of winter must give way to the omnipotence of the sun, and sure as the unfurling word of the Creator are the prophecies of coming harvest. For this time the fields are alluring, the orchards are flowers to pluck, fruits to gather, fields to reap, and all manner of physical bounty to be garnered by-and-by. Meanwhile the labor goes on. So with life. For what are we planning? What demands do men make of their shrubs? Flowers. What of their orchards? Fruits. What of their meadows? Grass. What of their own fields? Grain. Of each the intelligent culturist asks the highest of which it is capable. With nothing less can he be satisfied. What does God expect of us? The same—the best of which our natures are capable. Who waits only for blessing on a fruit tree? Who would be satisfied with straw in a