



## The Epworth League Consecration Service



### THE ROLL CALL.

There is no plan for the conduct of the Consecration Meeting which, for permanent use, can surpass the roll-call. Some societies may find that the calling of the roll once a month becomes formal; but doubtless the vast majority of societies will testify that there has been no such result in their case. The advantages of the roll-call are: (1) The saving of time in the meeting; (2) the feeling of obligation impressed upon the minds of the members, who do not like to be absent when they know their names will be called; (3) the information which it gives to the Lookout and Prayer-meeting Committees as to the persons taking part, thus enabling these committees to ascertain the faithfulness to the consecration service; (4) the prominence it gives to the individual member, whose name is thus publicly proclaimed on every such occasion. He can not help but feel the importance of his position as a member of the society. Christians sometimes almost forget that they are members of the church because the fact is not made sufficiently public, and they are not brought to the front as frequently as would be to their advantage.

### A VARIATION.

One society has employed a variation of the roll-call, which seems to be useful. The names of the members are written and copied. This may be done by hectograph, mimeograph, or other process. A complete copy is given to each member. On consecration night these copies are supposed to be in the hands of all, and the lists are scanned as the members participate. The first one on the roll takes part, then the second, and so on. If one is absent, of course there is a momentary pause, and the one who sees his name next in the list participates. This plan commends itself as useful by way of variety. The names can also be written on the blackboard. The roll-call should always be conducted in the most solemn manner, and should be preceded and followed by prayer.

When the secretary calls the names he need not always follow the alphabetic order, or even the order of the names on the membership record, but frequently at the other end or in the middle.

### AFTER THE ROLL-CALL.

At the close of every consecration meeting the secretary, or whoever calls the roll, should ask whether they have been omitted in the roll-call. No matter how careful the secretary may have been, such omissions are likely to have occurred, and the person who is omitted will be very likely to feel hurt. At the same time, an invitation should be given to all associate members and visitors who may wish to take part. It would be no harm, indeed, if the president or some prominent member should ask the visitors by name to give a word of greeting.

### TOPIC FOR THE EVENING.

It is well, as a rule, to keep fairly close to the topic for the evening. The topic for the first week in each month is chosen with a view to its suitability for the consecration, and its use will keep the service from becoming formal and uninteresting. While it may be made the basis of thought for the evening, it should be understood that members need not confine themselves to it, but are free to give utterance to any thought that may be helpful.

### DEFINITE CONSECRATION.

Amos R. Wells, in his excellent book, "Our Crowning Meeting," suggests that it is well occasionally to give the consecration meeting some very definite and specific object of thought, so that from it may go forth a clearly marked influence into the lives to be lived the coming month. The needs of the associate members, for instance, may be held in remembrance at one meeting. Another meeting may be made one of special consecration to missions; another, to the work in the Sunday-school; another, to helping the mid-week prayer meeting of the church; another, to the enrichment of private devotion and spiritual life; another, to work for the associate members. We have heard of a society that made it its special consecration object for a month not to speak a cross word or even frown, at home, or in any other place. That was a consecration purpose worth having, and undoubtedly that consecration meeting had an effect on the coming month. Announcement should be made of these special objects one week before the meeting, that all may be prepared to take some appropriate part.

### BEWARE OF FORMALITY.

There is danger of the Consecration Meeting becoming stereotyped and formal. When the members respond to their

names by simply repeating a verse of scripture, and not always well selected verses, or by answering "here," the service is apt to become mechanical and wearisome. There is, however, no necessity for this, indeed, it may be made the most spiritually uplifting meeting of the month.

As Dr. Clark points out, its two-fold purpose is to review the progress made in the Christian life during the past month and to renew our vows for the coming month. We cannot look forward intelligently without looking backward on the way we have been led during the past four weeks, and we ought not to be able to look backward on the past without a new pledge of consecrated service for the month to come. These two thoughts—what God has done for us in the thirty days gone by, and what we intend to do for God's kingdom during the thirty days to come—should always be involved in the consecration meeting; and if they are not lost sight of, the meeting cannot be otherwise than a genuine source of inspiration.

### THE VERSE READERS' CLASS.

There will usually be quite a number of members who respond to their names by reading a verse of scripture. Make it a rule of the society that all passages of scripture used in this way must be memorized. Then get these persons to add just one sentence to the verse, such as, "I have come during the past week to find much help in this verse," or, "These words of Christ have become very precious to me," or, "I want to give for my testimony this sentence from Paul." The more experienced workers should occasionally do this, to encourage the timid ones.

### A TESTIMONY MEETING.

Once in a while have a testimony meeting. Do not pay much attention to the theme that evening. Do not allow any "speechifying." Open with prayer, and then give up the hour to testifying. We do not have enough of the recital of personal experience in our devotional meetings. In some churches the league meeting is the only class meeting which the young people attend. Personal experience ought to be made prominent. Let it be known that everybody is expected to testify. That does not mean to comment on some truth, or quote some author, or recite a verse of poetry. It means to tell what the Saviour has done for us in our heart experience. Have the secretary call the roll. Miss no one. And seek to induce every one present to take some part, even if the testimony is but a sentence long.

### THE TIME AND WAY TO TESTIFY.

Be among the first to speak. Delay only adds to the nervous shrinking felt by many timid souls.

Be willing even to blunder rather than make no attempt to speak for the Master.

When you get up to speak, be sure not to tell those present that you have not had time to give the topic a thought.

An ounce of your own experience is worth more than a ton of trite quotations.

Read helps at home, but not in the meeting.

If you desire to confess your own faults, do so humbly, but it is an unwise and unlovely thing to condemn or scold others.

Relate some story or incident that you have read, to illustrate some phase of the topic.

A thought warm with life never fails to hit the mark. Avoid set phrases. Speak naturally.

Do not try to do the easiest things, but do the hard thing. Don't be a weak-kneed participant; stand boldly upon your feet.

### A BIOGRAPHICAL MEETING.

A biographical meeting offers an admirable break in the consecration meeting routine. For one evening, study may be made of some of the many beautiful consecrated lives that have been inspired by the wonderful story of Jesus. The great roll of missionaries and philanthropists will furnish an abundance of these. For examples take John G. Paton, John Howard, Henry Martyn, D. L. Moody, Hugh Price Hughes, Miss Haverhill, Fannie Crosby, David Livingstone, John Wesley. The best way to study these lives is to assign different periods to different members, asking them to prepare very brief written sketches, or, far better, very brief talks about them. This should not occupy more than fifteen minutes. At the close, the meeting should be thrown open, and each member should be expected to have something to say regarding the subject of the evening, either giving some story relating to the person studied, or commenting in some way on the life and its lessons. The secretary should keep careful record, to see that all take part.