

## Altitudes of Faith

By J. MARVIN NICHOLS, RATON, NEW MEXICO.

To faith's enlightened sight,  
All the mountains flame with light;  
Hei, is high—but God is higher,  
Circling us with hosts of fire.

**T**HE eye would suffer pain were it not that it looks upon one vast panorama. Vision is restful because of its ever-changing view. It is not one weary expanse. Heights and valleys, rolling prairies and wooded hills, barren wastes and fruitful fields, clouds big with refreshing showers and the skies that look like brass—all this mighty sweep of vision is saved from weariness by things that are near and different. Far-off horizons suddenly draw near. Monotony is an evil and the source of life's unrest. That which breaks the even tenor is always a blessing.

I shall never forget how that once I was wearied by the ocean itself. Beneath me were its fathomless depths. Above me a cloudless dome of blue, unbroken only when the stars stole out to keep their vigils. To my right and to my left stretched a weary waste whose distant rim seemed all but to touch the sky. A dead calm is always unbearable. Nothing is ever so grand as when the monotony is broken. In the grip of the storm it is sublime. It is a perfect relief to watch the tides roll in from one over the other. There's a charm in the wild witchery of the waves. The whispering winds tell their story. The pounding sea throbs on. We listen to the restless sighings of the ocean. It thrills us in its effort to break away from eternal confinement. Sometimes, in the distance, fringed heights lift their heads from the depths below. It is rest—to mark the headlands that fret the tides as they come and go. Vision never tires of watching the crested waves as they dance and gleam. We love to gaze on the thick-plumed squadrons of the sea. So it always is. At last, that which serves to break the monotony of life is always a blessing. It may be the tempest—it may be the storm; no matter which.

The life of faith has its low level stretches. Because there are valleys, there are the high and holy hills. Long distances are gone over in the earthly pilgrimage. These plains would always be desolate were it not that here and there are the heights that loom into view.

On one of the great Texas prairies the monotony is suddenly broken by old Pilot Knob. I remember that out in Arizona we would drive across a weary waste only to ascend another mountain range. On reaching the summit there would spread out before us a vast table-land on whose distant

border verged another frightful ascent. Thus, on and on—here a great plateau, there a mountain height—on and on, over the valley and up the mountain side—till at last we breathed the pure ozone and drank the tonic of the lofty range.

Faith's broad experience has its common stretches. There are plains that border along earth's low-grounds. Here the air is laden with the deadly miasma that rises from the bogs not far away. Thank God! Beyond us are the hills. These are the altitudes where the air is pure and fragrant. These are not the common places.

Right in the midst of life's toilsome journey we come to fastnesses among whose heights we can shut out the world's loud roar. The years of wandering in the desert are forgotten when we reach the crest of some radiant Nebo. Sinai's wilderness is lost to view when we sit down on some Pisgah's height. Into such experiences God sometimes suddenly lifts us. We shall not always abide in the valley. From these enrapturing summits we survey, with unrestricted vision, the land of promise. The outlook cannot be had in the vales that are so long and deep. The very hills restrict our vision and we cannot see beyond. Only from the hill-tops comes the ever-expanding vision. The higher the summits the more distant the horizon.

Some day, thank God, we shall come to heights so lofty that there will be no more horizon—we shall find the undimmed vision. God will invite us to sit down in faith's awful altitudes. Life's horizon will fade away—the mountains will flame with light. The very air will be populous with the ransomed and the blood-washed. Faith's enlarged sight will survey undreamed-of realms. We shall find ourselves in company with all our loved and lost of the years gone by. The holy hush will be broken only by redemption's song. The very discords of life will be gathered up into one vast symphony. And we shall see that far down the river of God lies all our richer inheritance.

Thank God for these holy heights! They do not lead back to the valleys whence we came. They lead out upon the high plateaus and bring us again to heights yet far more lofty. In life's pilgrimage there are vast and tiresome stretches. Some sweet day we shall be lost amid the hills of God. Oh, yes—it is a pilgrimage—but from faith to faith, from glory to glory. Some day the altitudes will be so high that the tumult of earth will never reach us. The jars and jargon of the earth will be swallowed up in the music of the spheres.

## A Message to League Presidents

**W**WE have adapted the following "message" from the stirring appeal of Horace L. Houghton, President Iowa State Epworth League, as given in the *Epworth Herald*:  
Fellow-Presidents: If we make good as leaders of the young people of the Church, we must have a few things in our minds as clear as the sunlight, namely

1. The reason for the League's existence.

Why was it raised up? Why does it exist? Why give it a place of importance in the councils and plans of the Church? At the same time, God touched the hearts of a number of men in different places with the thought, "How can I keep our young Christians in the way of righteousness? How can I develop within them spiritual life? How can I put them to work for the Master? How can I train them for His service?" The answer was found in the organization of various young people's societies, finally resulting in the Epworth League.

It was a real need, divinely met, through heart burden and answer to prayer.

Locally applied, the League stands for a good Christian experience in the hearts of the young, and for an active and efficient service.

2. The permanent elements of success.

By that is meant those features of the work which are always present in the really successful League, and the absence of which are marked in the dead or dying ones.

They are—

(1). A clear aim. Enough has been said on that point.

(2). A simple plan.  
Insist on the monthly business meeting. You can have no real success without it. Have a written report from each department. Let there be co-operation between the departments. Have a definite period for the united pushing of one thing, as for example, THE CANADIAN EPWORTH ERA subscription campaign. Instead of leaving it to one person, let all the other officers co-operate in the special plans of the fourth vice-president. An ERA social; a talk by the president at the de-

votional meeting; a word by the pastor from the pulpit and so on. Push it! Push it hard while you are at it!

(3). Team play.

Eight commonplace folks who are always there and always at it, working together, will do much more and accomplish far better results than eight erratic geniuses each of whom can do big things by spasms, but none of whom will work persistently with others.

Team play means co-operation with the pastor in all of his plans for the young people of the Church. He will soon speak of us as "my best helpers."

The Conference and District officers who mean to be something more than figureheads are planning continually to inspire, to train, and to help practically the local workers. Team play means to follow out their suggestions and to fall into line with their plans.

The General and Associate Secretaries and the General Board have a broad vision and a minute knowledge of details. They also have the work deeply at heart. Team play means to back them up heartily in their suggestions and labors.

(4). Personal equipment.

The President must be informed so that he can suggest definite lines of work to each member of his Executive. To that end he must read the best books, study the best plans, attend the best gatherings, talk with other skilled workers, and correspond with leaders. He should have a personal notebook in which to jot down the thoughts and suggestions that will flash into his mind from time to time.

Remember! In your League are the elements of power. It rests with us to arouse, to organize, and to put into motion these elements that will result in blessing to-day and in well-trained, Spirit-filled leaders to-morrow.

"Given health, interest in life, plenty of work, purpose, and aspiration, you cannot be a pessimist. The pessimist is mostly people who have nothing to do. Pessimism is the product of either indolence or liver disease."