

The Reading Course

Presentation of Certificates.

Rev. John Morrison writes: "In Kensington (London) Church a special service was held on Sabbath evening, September 10th, which will prove a well-marked milepost in the intellectual life of the Epworth League. A sermon on "Books and Reading," was preached by the pastor, after which the members of the Reading Circle who had written in the examination, eight in number, were called to the altar, a few words of commendation for the work already done, and of encouragement to continue in the development of the intellectual life side by side with the spiritual, addressed to them, and the certificates, each one neatly rolled up and tied with ribbon, were presented. After the service a set of the Epworth League Reading Course books were shown the Leaguers, and definite action is being taken for an early ordering, and settling down to the work of studying them. The best we have had, are the books for this year."

This Year's Reading Course.

Rev. C. W. Watch, of Belleville, writes as follows of this year's Reading Course: "I have read with a great deal of interest the books of the Reading Course for this year. The price of these books is insignificant when compared with their value. In Dr. Wood-Allen's 'Marvels of our Bodily Dwelling,' we are taught to know better the house God has built for us to live in. 'The New Citizenship,' by Dr. Batten, not only reveals the Christly ideals for our living, but also in a most practical way proves to us the possibility of so living. Dr. Withrow's 'Beacon Lights of the Reformation,' makes a panorama of the principal characters of the Reformation days to so vividly pass before us that when we close the book we know both the men and the victories through which have come to us so much of our modern light and liberty. In 'Among the Forces,' by Bishop Warren, we have the great forces of nature made clear to our eyes with a teaching for our heart. This book is as charming as any romance and infinitely more instructive."

For a League to ignore the Reading Course this year is to fail in one of those opportunities of helping itself to the best.

"Reading With a Pencil."

One must own his books to do it. Scribbling in other people's books, even those of a library, is a nuisance. Owning the books—here is a hint or two:

A clear mental grasp must precede any helpful marking. Skimming may do for some purposes, but will not leave much in the brain of the man who does it. Look first for ideas. They are more important than words. Words are the pipes through which the refreshing waters of thought flow from the author's mind to your own. The water is more than the pipe which brings it. If the ideas in his brain are valuable, and he uses words of the right kind, the communication is complete. Mark the idea. Drawing lines underneath will help to make it prominent if you have occasion to look it up afterwards. In seeking for ideas think whether they confirm your own or differ from them. Have you seen the same thought expressed elsewhere? If so locate the place and make a note for a page referring to it. Distinguish between facts and opinions, between proved and assumed facts. Your reading should be stimulating to your own thought, and that thought must not be a mere echo of what the author says.

Some books are intended to show the beauties of language. They appeal to the artist's instinct. In them you are to look for perfection of form. When such beauty is found, mark it! If a noble idea is cast in a perfect mould of words, commit it to memory; it will serve you well in conversation, writing, or public speech.

When a book is intended to go over it hastily again. See where you have marked it, and why. If you have done it well, you will discover that the marked passages will give a synopsis of the book. Marking with a pencil is valuable only as it stimulates close mental application and absorption. This is difficult at first, but may become habitual. Brains and fingers must work together.—G. A. Warburton, in "Men."

Readings for November.

Week commencing November 6th—
Marvels of our Bodily Dwelling. Chapters 16, 17, 18.

The New Citizenship. Chapter 5.

Week commencing November 12th—
Marvels of our Bodily Dwelling. Chapters 19, 20, 21.

The New Citizenship. Chapter 6.

Week commencing November 19th—
Marvels of our Bodily Dwelling. Chapters 22, 23, 24.

The New Citizenship. Chapter 7.

Week commencing November 26th—
Marvels of our Bodily Dwelling. Chapters 25, 26, 27.

The New Citizenship. Chapter 8.

The plan of readings has been mapped out for the whole season. Those who desire it may secure it by applying to the General Secretary.

The readings are planned to extend from October 1st to March 31st. The examination of April is left for Review, and the examinations will take place in May.

Another Forward Movement.

BY A DELEGATE.

I had the pleasure of attending the Hamilton Conference Epworth League Convention at Woodstock in February last, and was pleased that so much time was given to literary work.

The difficulties in our Conference may be experienced by others, and what I say may apply, with equal force, to our Canadian Methodism.

We have Forward Movement for Missions, Evangelistic Campaign, and it appears to me our greatest need now is a Forward Movement in literary work.

We are seeking admission to our League candidates with every degree of education and literary attainment. The Church is not responsible for their education, but I claim she should direct them in acquiring a taste for good literature. This she is endeavoring nobly to perform through the literary department of the League. She gives through her periodicals a rich and liberal provision of valuable current literature. Then the Reading Course is designed to reach young and old, and inculcate a taste for the best literature, and incite habits of close-connected thinking. The Reading Circle has made an excellent start, but there is great room for improvement. Some of the objections that found vent at Woodstock are: We have no time; it will detract from the spirituality of our members; take them from the regular prayer meeting; books beyond the reach of ordinary readers, etc.

I take it that the young people of Methodism are seeking to develop the perfect man; then who can afford to forego the help and inspiration of the Reading Circle? We must sacrifice the less for the greater. It will bring us pleasure, profit, and power. The question of time is easily answered—we have all the time there is. It is a question of

interest, rather than of time. We can do, generally speaking, what we want to do. Do we realize that we belong to the Master physically, mentally, and spiritually? Then we will see that we owe it to Him to improve ourselves for whatever work He has for us. Let me suggest a division of the week. If home duties only permit of one night a week out, attend a prayer-meeting; if two nights, attend one prayer-meeting and one reading circle. If three, attend two prayer-meetings and one circle meeting. Then there should be not less than two full evenings at home for study—one centered on the Sabbath school lesson and one on circle work.

There is still another free night out of six for social culture. Any spare time on the Sabbath could hardly be better employed than in reading some of the books of the course.

If we are worthy the name we bear, let us be methodical. Life is not meant for social intercourse only, it is for business for the King. We cannot afford to stand idly by and miss the opportunities for improvement.

Get into the wave of enthusiasm that is now moving forward.

The books are beyond the reach of no one of ordinary mental ability. A child can understand them; a sage can revel in the sublimity of the truth they teach. A fine selection for this season—science, physiology, Christian citizenship, and lights of the Reformation.

Qualifications for membership are, a desire for improvement, and four cents a week for a year.

Two kinds of young people may be excused—those who have to their credit some definite line of helpful study, and those who are sufficiently equipped already. All others should join.

Galt, Sept., 1899.

Notes.

MR. W. R. MAXINGO, of Essex, writes: "The New Reading Course is magnificent."

MISS ALICE E. DRUMMOND, of Paris, writes that they "are expecting to have a larger circle this year, and will have an increase in the number taking the examination."

The name of Mr. J. E. Whiting, of Wesley Church, League, Toronto, should have been reported last month among those who passed the Epworth League examination.

REV. T. J. PARR, B.A., of Hamilton, writes: "Judged by its intrinsic merits the new Reading Course is the most popular yet published under the auspices of the Epworth League."

MR. J. B. LOBB, of Galt, writes that there is an excellent prospect for two large circles in that town during the coming season. He says: "New members are coming in, and old ones are enthusiastic."

Our friends in England have followed our example by selecting several books as a Young People's Reading Course, and selling them at a reduced rate. It is the only successful way to carry on this work.

MR. J. M. BARBOUR, a prominent business man of Evansville, Indiana, who has held many leading positions in the Epworth League of his State, writes a cheering note, in which he asks that this year's Reading Course be sent to his address. Mr. Barber says: "The books are fine, and worth more than the price. I hope every young Methodist in the country will read them."

At the Methodist rally of the Christian Endeavor Convention, held recently at Sackville, N.B., Mrs. Borden gave an interesting account of the work of the Sackville Reading Circle during last year. She said that the Circle numbered twenty-five, with seventeen sets of books. The interest developed was remarkable, and an increase in numbers and efficiency is confidently expected for the coming year.