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THE WOMAN
PAROCHIAL
WORKER

Pamphlet

PLAIN GUIDES TO LAY WORK, No. 11

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THE WOMAN
PAROCHIAL WORKER

BY

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LONDON

SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING
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PLAIN GUIDES TO LAY WORK

1. THE CHURCHWARDEN.
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3. THE SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER.
4. THE DISTRICT VISITOR.
5. THE CHURCH COUNCILLOR.
6. THE LAY READER.
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8. THE BELLRINGER.
9. THE CHOIRMAN.
10. THE SECRETARY AND TREASURER
OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH
COUNCIL.
11. THE WOMAN PAROCHIAL WORKER.

3d. each.

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THE WOMAN PAROCHIAL WORKER

THE NEED FOR THE PAROCHIAL WORKER

WE live in an age when, although there is secretly a great heart hunger for God, there is outwardly a growing indifference to all forms of organised religion. Conventional church attendance has almost ceased. The old motive of "fear," that drove so many into the church in olden days, has gone, and the constraining power of the Love of God has not yet taken its place. As has been said, "We live in a kind of interregnum, when there is the doubting of all faith: nothing is right, nothing is wrong. Multitudes are wandering restlessly to and fro with an intense hunger for the certainty of old days." But these are generally the older people; the young are growing up with the feeling that religion is for the few whose temperament and mentality require it, but that it is outside practical life, and neither needed for the building of sound character nor for the accomplishment of successful work.

Surely therefore the crying need of the present day is that the world should have a deeper revelation of God—a restatement of the truth in terms to meet the needs and life of this twentieth century. This knowledge of God can only come through JESUS CHRIST, "who for our sakes . . . was made MAN." That implies that He took upon Himself the whole of human nature; therefore, does He not need to be interpreted and presented to the world by women as well as men?

Women have always been found in the service of the Church. They ministered to our Lord in the days of His earthly life, and it is worthy of note that there is no record of any woman having failed Him! His commendation of them is many times given, and we ever

remember that it was through the matchless purity and absolute self-surrender of her who was "blessed amongst women" that the Incarnate Son came into the world.

The great message of the Resurrection was also committed to a woman—"Go, tell my brethren"—and all down the ages the story of the service of women can be traced. The Church owes more than can ever be recognised to their service, specially to the sacrifice and devotion of countless busy wives of clergymen who, in addition to the cares of their own households, have toiled selflessly in their parishes with little public recognition or encouragement.

Until recent days "Work for the Church" was always considered to be limited to definitely parochial or evangelistic work, but with the larger, truer Vision of Christ as "Lord of all good life," the realisation has come that all work done in His Name to help right wrongs and set forward His Kingdom of Love is Christian work, and the old-time barrier between secular and sacred is being swept away.

This is as it should be, and the blessing and recognition of the Church is now given to all departments of work. The Inter-Diocesan Council for Women's Work (Church House, Westminster, S.W. 1) grants certificates to qualified women engaged in Social Purity or General Social Work; health work, including medical, nursing, and hygiene; Club Leaders, and all educational workers, provided that they show they have an adequate knowledge of the Life and Teaching of our Lord, sufficient knowledge of the foundation on which that teaching was laid, and also of the common Faith of the Church.

In many dioceses licences are granted by the Bishops to women holding these or similar certificates.

There is a real danger, however, lest in the wider vision of service for the Church now before women the great sphere offered to the parochial worker should be overlooked. In these days enthusiastic response is being aroused—and rightly—to the call to work overseas, and the call to social service, but the call to regular parochial work often fails to attract and inspire.

The reason for this must surely be that the great need for pastoral work has not been realised.

We are told of the decrease in the number of clergy in England—a matter of 5,000 or more; and we also read of the terrible shrinkage in the number of Baptisms, Confirmations, children in Sunday Schools and Bible Classes—a decrease of many thousands in the last few years according to "The Church Year Book." At the same time, we find the number of church services held has slightly increased, and there is a distinct increase in the number of daily services, and in particular of daily celebrations.

It was pointed out by a speaker at a recent Conference that, if there are fewer clergy and more services, the work which must have suffered of necessity is the pastoral work, the steady visiting in the homes, with the quiet continuous feeding of the flock. It is not too much to suppose, therefore, that the terrible shrinkage in these four particulars is mainly due to that fact.

But this pastoral work is pre-eminently the work in which women can take their part. Nothing can ever take the place of the pastoral visitation and work of the parish priest, but women by the very power of their latent motherhood have something of the spirit of loving friendship, tact, insight, self-giving, sympathy, and understanding, which make them specially fitted for this work. That essential quality in men which has been described as "a true pastoral spirit," in women just means "a motherly heart!" Surely the time has come therefore when the call to serve Christ in the Church at home should be sounded forth with clarion note, and the very disfavour into which this department of work has fallen be regarded as a challenge to the women of our day and generation.

TRAINING, STATUS, AND REQUIREMENTS OF THE PAROCHIAL WORKER

Of all the many changes that have taken place in the life of the nation during the past fifty years, perhaps none is more striking than the raising of the standard

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of work. In all departments the trained skilled worker is steadily superseding the untrained and unskilled. Education, for instance, in the past was largely entrusted to the hands of completely untrained women. But the day of the untrained governess, the little private school, the untrained teacher in elementary schools, is largely over, and new ideals and methods of education have come into being, demanding all the skill of highly-trained efficient teachers. The same advance, though perhaps more gradual, has come in the standard of the women serving the Church.

The training of a worker is of vital importance. It is the foundation upon which her future work will be built, and time spent in training must not be grudged. It will be of a threefold character—intellectual, devotional, and practical—and as the greater the work, the longer the preparation needed for it, the tendency in Training Colleges is to lengthen the course rather than shorten it. The intellectual standard is continually being raised, and students are generally expected to qualify in theology, psychology, methods of education, pastoralia, though subjects vary in different Colleges. The practical work also varies, but includes practical experience in all departments of parochial work, reformed Sunday School methods, charity organisation work, some social purity experience, and all departments of work among young people. The usual period of two years is not any too long in which to take the whole course, and many students extend the time to three years.

The devotional training is of vital importance, and all Colleges provide for definite instruction in the Christian life, and adequate time for private devotion as well as corporate worship. Many Colleges also arrange a Quiet Day each term and an annual Retreat. It might be asked why this intellectual, practical, and devotional training could not be obtained equally well at home, without the expense of a two-year residence in College. But the reply would be that such a course could not possibly give the same results. A book has recently been published entitled "The Art of Persons Living in

Unity," and that title might be taken as a very excellent definition of the value of resident training. It is the adaptation of the individual to the corporate life that is of value, the happy balance between the restraint of individual freedom for the good of the whole, and the exercise and development of originality and initiative, which is the ideal of training.

Much controversy has raged around this question in recent years. The accusation has often been made that trained workers were all to type, turned out like little machines, unequal to meeting emergencies; and many girls have been genuinely afraid to go to Training Colleges lest their powers should be repressed. But where this accusation is true, it has been the result of mistakes in training—not of training itself. Modern educational methods are now in vogue in nearly all training centres, the day of the imposition of endless petty rules is over, and most Colleges are self-governed, the students themselves deciding what is most useful for the corporate life.

Colleges vary, however, in so many ways that intending students would be wise to make careful enquiries from several, in order to find out which scheme of training and mode of life would be most helpful to their particular cases.

But there are many workers already in the field who were not able to enjoy the advantages of training, and who realise that their intellectual equipment has been meagre, though their devotional life may be strong, and experience has been their teacher in practical work. Much is being done at the present time for such workers. An excellent Correspondence Course is arranged by St. Christopher's College, Blackheath; a simpler one could be taken through the Mothers' Union, or courses are arranged in many dioceses. In order to get the Inter-Diocesan Council Certificate examinations must be passed in Old and New Testament and Creed.

Parochial workers must also take a simple examination in the Meaning and Practice of Prayer, and the Practical Knowledge of the Prayer Book; also in Ideals

and Methods of Pastoral Work. This may sound not only stiff and difficult, but quite unnecessary to many workers who have done successful work for years without all this "book knowledge"! But a little thought will surely change this attitude. Do we not find that mistaken ideas of God are at the root of so much of the irreligion of the present day? And has not all the discussion on the New Prayer Book revealed the appalling ignorance on the part of so many of what the Church *really* believes and teaches? Surely the great need of the present day is for the definite, constructive education of the people. Slack thinking and easy-going belief are so often at the roots of slack living. We are discovering that Thought is a vital thing, and that as a man thinks so he lives. Every worker, therefore, should be qualified to teach the progressive revelation of God as shown in the Old Testament, with the full Revelation of Himself and of His will for the world as shown in the life and teaching of our Lord: the history of the birth and growth of the Church: and a summary of her faith as given in the Creeds.

This may involve painful effort on the part of elderly workers, or those engaged in strenuous work with little time for leisure; but the goal is increased efficiency in the service of God, and that is a goal worthy of sacrifice. Many dioceses, however, recognise that written examinations are almost impossible for older women, and therefore the actual examination is excused workers over a certain age or those who have worked for five years continuously in the diocese, provided that they attend the course of lectures or read the set books. The Certificate, though valuable, IS NOT ALL; it is the *knowledge* behind the Certificate that counts.

STATUS IN THE PARISH.—Possibly there is no other worker whose status varies more than the parochial worker. In some parishes she is still regarded as the "parish hack," entrusted with no responsibility, and with all the monotonous, less interesting work given to her. But that state of affairs is rapidly dying out, though alas! until it dies completely, women of Univer-

sity training, in choosing spheres of life in which their powers may find ample scope, are still likely to shun that calling which needs them above all others, and in which they might find their true vocation. In many parishes, however, things are entirely different. In some the worker is accounted a member of the Staff, attends Staff meetings, and is given full responsibility for organising all work amongst women and girls. It is hoped the happy day will soon come when, even in parishes where the vicar may prefer to keep the staff purely clerical, the trained worker will be regarded as a colleague, given entire responsibility for her own department, consulted before changes are made in her work, and informed about parochial matters before the general public.

At the same time the worker must realise that, though she is regarded as the head of her own department of work, and entrusted with responsibility concerning it, the vicar is head of the whole parish; that she works under him, that he must be consulted before important changes are made, and that his is the final and supreme authority. Should any worker unfortunately find herself in a parish where, owing to diversity of opinion as to Church outlook or methods of work, she cannot loyally co-operate with her vicar, it is her bounden duty to refrain from criticism whilst in the parish, and, if things become impossible, to resign.

DIOCESAN RECOGNITION.—It is of comparatively late years that any sort of Diocesan Recognition has been given to women workers, but now, largely owing to the efforts of the Inter-Diocesan Council for Women's Work, this is being given in a large number of dioceses. Those women who have gained the I.D.C. Certificate are now, in an increasing number of dioceses, granted a licence by their Diocesan Bishop; and those whose work requires it are allowed to address meetings of women and children in consecrated buildings where the incumbent so desires.

HER NEEDS.—I. *Necessity for Adequate Time for Devotion.*—Amongst all the pressing needs of a worker's

life this stands of paramount importance, and yet is the most easily neglected. It must be recognised by the worker herself, and she must impress it upon the clergy employing her! An hour a day appears the minimum, and yet how few workers manage to get this. Work presses in, and as each day dawns there are many duties clamouring for attention. But the work is God's and can only be done in His strength; the worker can only pass on what she has herself received, and however vitally important the work may seem, *the* vitally important work is, like Gabriel, to "stand in the Presence" and be sent out from it. The greatest struggle in a worker's life will rage round this keeping of her daily quiet time. She will be well advised to secure the major part of it before going out into the parish. A great aid towards the keeping of the devotional rule is the marking in a diary of the actual time spent in devotion.

2. *Adequate Time for Study* is also a necessity for every worker, though this time also will probably have to be fought for, as the day's duties so frequently crowd it out. But no worker will be able really to meet the needs of those to whom she goes, unless she herself is continually taking in. Some time in each week should be conscientiously set apart for real solid study. The expense of new books is a real difficulty, but most dioceses have a lending library of theological books, or they could be obtained from the Bray Library, or from the Mothers' Union.

But if workers are to teach their people, it is essential that they should themselves be freshly taught. Study should not only be confined to theology, but we should read up some of the books recommended by the Industrial Christian Fellowship, to learn the social aspect of Christianity. We need also to read matter relating to such subjects as Theosophy, Spiritualism, the British Israel Theory, Betting and Gambling, and Conception Control, in order to know how to rightly answer the problems with which we may be confronted in our visiting.

3. *Scope for Initiative in Work*.—It has been claimed that the trained worker should be regarded as head of her own department. This should mean that she is entrusted with freedom to develop the work as seems best to her. But changes must be made gradually. There is no stronger mark of Britishers than their conservatism, and the feeling exists in many parishes that in Church matters "what has been good enough for our fathers is good enough for us," and changes are resented most keenly. The worker will stand between the old, who do not wish to change *anything*, and the young, who probably wish to change *everything*, and all her tact and wisdom will be called upon. It is wise to remember that every change should be prepared for, and of course none should be made without the approval of the vicar.

4. *An Adequate Salary* is also essential if the worker is to do her best work. In times past the Church has often been accused, whilst caring for others, of sweating her women workers; and in some parishes, alas! that is still true today. However, it is more generally recognised that to do efficient work, good food, proper accommodation, and suitable clothing are necessary, and that a salary of £150 is only just sufficient to provide these. Every effort is being made by Training Colleges and Boards of Women's Work to raise all salaries to this level.

The question of dress may seem a minor matter, but is really of far-reaching importance. Opinions differ as to the wisdom of a uniform. For special work, or to distinguish women who have pledged themselves to lifelong service involving celibacy, it certainly has its advantages. But the very fact of uniform is liable to give the impression that the wearer is apart from ordinary human life, and whilst this may sometimes attract, it more frequently creates a barrier which has to be broken down before any point of contact can be reached. There is much to be said, therefore, in favour of ordinary, dainty, well made garments, sufficiently in the mode to pass without remark, and as becoming to the wearer and attractive as possible. To some workers

dress appears of little importance, but surely to those who believe in the Incarnation, even clothing has a sacramental value, and the woman who is the bearer of Christ's Message should plan that, before the time comes for speech, the very sight of her should commend the message which she brings. Specially does this apply to those who work amongst the young. More young people have been "put off religion" by the dulness and dowdiness of really earnest women than could be numbered!

5. *Sufficient Time for Rest, Recreation, and Outside Interests.*—"All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy," we are told, and surely the reason why in the past so many workers have given the impression of dreariness and dulness is just because they had so little time for recreation! Even Church workers cannot break God's laws without paying the penalty, and many a breakdown in health is due to the same cause. But in these days nearly every worker is given one free day a week, a few days at least after Christmas and Easter, and a full month in the summer.

It is essential that the day off weekly should be taken conscientiously, and no work allowed to encroach upon it. When possible it is well to escape from the parish altogether. When this cannot be managed the worker should try to use the day for refreshment of mind and body in the best way possible. Few women with comfortable homes realise what a boon it would be to a lonely worker to be invited for her free day. No special entertainment would be necessary, the worker could be left alone in the garden, or in an easy chair by the fire, with a new novel or magazine and the wireless! Just a social meal with women of her own mental calibre, the entering for a few hours into the friendliness of a family circle, and the woman worker would return to her lonely lodgings rested and invigorated, ready to face another week's hard work.

We have heard much lately about the necessity of a hobby—specially for middle-aged people—and every worker should make an effort to have some special

interest which, even if crowded out of her usually busy life, can claim her attention on her free day and in holiday time. It is important, too, that she should arrange to be set free from time to time to widen her outlook and promote her efficiency by attending conferences, courses of lectures, etc. Of course the time for an Annual Retreat is an absolute necessity, and should not be taken from her holiday.

6. *Security of Tenure.*—One of the main hindrances in the past to the taking up of Church work has been the feeling of insecurity of tenure. A worker could be dismissed almost without notice at the mere whim of her vicar. But those days are passing. In many cases now a written agreement demanding three months' notice on either side is drawn up, and in dioceses where Boards of Women's Work exist, workers are protected in other ways. In some dioceses Pension Schemes are already in existence, but the position is at present unsatisfactory as the worker may leave such a diocese and go to another where no such scheme exists. The Advisory Council for Women's Work is considering this matter, and it is hoped that before many years have past some general scheme may be in existence.

WORK IN THE PARISH

IT is quite impossible in a brief pamphlet to consider the many sides of a woman's work in a parish; the very fringe can merely be touched in one or two places. She is placed there as one of its spiritual leaders, and her aim should be to lead all those whose lives she touches nearer to God—"to know Him more clearly, love Him more dearly, and follow Him more nearly."

This great purpose should run like a golden thread through all her work, and must ever be kept in sight:

I give you the end of a golden string,
Just wind it into a ball;
'Twill lead you in at Heaven's gate,
Set in Jerusalem's wall.

Let us consider, then, some of the qualities of leadership: the Vision that by keeping the Goal ever before

the eyes draws others toward it; the Enthusiasm which is infectious and sets others aglow; the Steadfastness that carries on through dreariness and monotony, keeping her stable and strong, unmoved either by success or failure; the Joy which is deep rooted and independent of circumstances; the Sense of Humour which imparts a spice of fun to the dullest day, and keeps her balanced with right sense of values; the Patience that never tires; the Love that never fails.

All these qualities, and many others, will be needed in the work. Well might we cry, "Who is sufficient for these things?" were it not for the promise, "My Grace is sufficient for thee, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." But the worker must remember that a leader is merely a "Foremost Companion," and therefore she must be training others to carry on the work which she starts. In every parish women can be found, even in the humblest walks of life, with latent powers of organisation and leadership, and it should be her place to discover and develop these. We have much to learn from the Nonconformists, where responsibility rests upon every member, and where the Women's Committees, often largely drawn from women of elementary school education, have done such gallant service.

It is futile for a worker to sit down and say, "I am obliged to do everything, for we have no workers in our parish"; it is her place to find and train some! Real leaders are to be found everywhere, and the most efficient worker is the one who does least of the actual routine work herself, but who has the largest band of women working under her, thus setting her free for other work.

Visiting in the homes of the people is, of course, the work of supremest importance. It is impossible to overestimate its value. Every worker should possess the excellent pamphlet, No. 4 in this series, on "The District Visitor," and such valuable help is to be found there that no further time need be spent on the subject in this pamphlet. Neither need reference be made to the work of the various Societies, Mothers' Union, G.F.S., Girl

Guides, and the different Missionary Societies, as such expert help can be obtained from their headquarters. Every worker would be wise to appeal to any of the above regarding literature and suggestions for improvement in method.

Help towards preparing for a Parochial Mission can be obtained from the Diocesan Women Messengers, and from the A.P.R., Abbey House, Victoria Street, S.W. 1., for all literature and information regarding Retreats—such a vital part of parish life. The social and welfare work in a parish is also a matter of supreme importance. Every worker should possess a pamphlet published by S.P.C.K. entitled, "The Church Worker and Social Agencies" (4d.). It will prove a veritable mine of wealth, giving information regarding every form of relief work, and guiding her as to the right agency to apply to in all eventualities. A few suggestions may, however, be made here regarding work not covered by any of the above departments.

(a) *Women's Fellowship*.—In parishes where the Mothers' Meeting is getting a little stale, it is quite a good plan to turn this into a Women's Fellowship, which is more or less a self-governing concern. A small Committee should be appointed by the members themselves, the worker acting as President. A Fellowship often proves more attractive than an ordinary Mothers' Meeting, partly because it is self-governed, and also because the programmes are more varied. The Committee would meet quarterly and draw up the programme for the session, one or two members being responsible for each week. Sometimes the afternoon could be recreative, either games, community singing, competitions, or even country dancing. No one enjoys dancing Sir Roger more than the dear old granny whom it carries back to the days of her youth, whilst younger women thoroughly enjoy a pleasure which has often been denied them since their marriage. At other times the major part of the time would be occupied by some intellectual interest—a speech on some current topic, a debate or group discussion, or reading from book or paper. The

latter part of every afternoon would be kept for devotional purposes, a five-minute talk or reading, a hymn and prayer.

(b) *Cottage Meetings*.—For busy mothers with a crowd of small children who effectually prevent them from attending church services, the old-fashioned Cottage Meetings are not to be despised. The worker would find a house with a large kitchen to which these mothers with their babies, and any old or infirm people in the district, could be invited. A big wall picture could be pinned up, and a little talk prepared upon it. The meeting would open with a hymn and prayer, a Bible reading describing the picture, the talk, another hymn, and the closing prayer. Much good has been done by these simple meetings, but they must never be allowed to take the place of the regular church services for those who can attend them.

(c) *Religious Training of Children*.—Another excellent piece of work could be done by the visiting of expectant mothers, and preparing them for the coming of their children, and specially preparing them for their Baptism. Real help also needs to be given to young mothers as to the religious training of their children, and the worker can find great opportunities here. More depends upon the home training than upon anything else, and we are being taught increasingly in these days the tremendous importance of first impressions. A scheme for the graded home teaching of religious knowledge can be obtained from St. Christopher's College, Blackheath.

(d) *Special Services*.—In some parishes a special series of Devotional or Intercession services for women could be held in Lent, or at other times. These could be taken by the worker if she has had the necessary training. Prayers and hymns should all lead up to the subject of the address, the whole service being framed to leave one clear impression in the minds of those who attend it.

(e) *Preparation of Addresses*.—One or two simple points about this should be kept in mind.

1. The subject-matter must be suitable for the special people to whom it is given. This may seem a commonplace, but frequently needs to be emphasised. Workers prepare courses of addresses and give them, regardless of whether their listeners are educated or less educated women, communicants or non-church-goers, young or old. The art of preparing an address is to visualise those to whom it is to be given, and to prepare material exactly suited to their spiritual capacity and the needs of their practical life. The mistake into which many a worker falls is that of "passing on" the very latest spiritual discovery or aid which she has personally received, quite forgetting that such teaching might probably not meet the needs of those to whom she speaks.

2. In preparing an address there must be one clear aim which permeates the whole. There should be the preliminary point of contact or introduction to grip the attention of those present, the actual teaching itself, and the summing up. The new lesson books of the Reformed Sunday School would be admirable helps in preparing addresses for those of little education, but illustrations must be chosen to fit the lives of the special audience. Simple homely illustrations are often very telling; we can well follow the example of our Lord, the great Story-Teller, whose illustrations were so often drawn from everyday life—the patching of old garments, bread-making, buying and selling, and the like.

3. Addresses should last about twenty minutes, and should aim at informing the intellect, stirring the heart, and getting the will to work. We are learning from Psychology how tremendously impression depends on subsequent action—"No impression without expression" is the ideal. In Sunday Schools we are learning the great value of expression work. Now, this principle may be applied to all work. The women can hardly be set to do expression work in church, but might sometimes be asked to write something on returning home; to repeat a summary embodying the address; or take some action which would put into practice the ideals set before them. Above all else they must be encouraged

to "do something." It was a wise padre who, when consulted by someone as to the best method of curing a fault, suggested that every time she committed it, she should go upstairs and put a pin in her frock, and count them at the end of each week, trying to reduce the number till at length there were none! To another consulting him as to a cure for a bad temper which, on enquiry, was found due to tiredness at the end of the day, the advice was given, in addition to advising extra rest, "Go upstairs every evening at 6 p.m. and tie a bit of black tape round your right wrist. Every time you see it, it will act as a reminder that you must be on your guard. When you have passed a week without losing your temper, take it off, but every time you slip again, you must wear it for the next three days, until at last you can leave it off altogether." Simple, sensible, and psychologically absolutely sound!

Let workers think out simple suggestions such as these for those to whom they speak.

4. Care must be taken to avoid all mannerisms. Most of us have little tricks of speech or manner, and it is well to ask for the criticism of a candid friend, or such harmless tricks might mar the effect of our most glowing eloquence!

5. In speaking it is wise to stand as still as possible, throwing the voice forward, using the natural voice on the best note to reach to the end of the hall or church. It is a good thing to get someone to sit at the back of the church, and to arrange a signal (such as raising the hand) in case one is not heard. Shouting is *not* necessary, only the finding of the right note to carry in the special place. Consonants must be sounded clearly, and words spoken slowly and plainly, or the value of the address may be lost. Gesture, when natural, is often effective, but is so frequently misused that the best advice for most people is to leave it alone.

WORK AMONGST THE SICK.—One important part of the worker's ministry will lie amongst the sick and infirm, who should be visited regularly. The visits to those really ill must be short, and at times when the invalid

is strongest. The worker should enter as quietly as possible, sometimes taking a flower or pinning up a picture where the eyes of the invalid could comfortably rest upon it, and changing this at the next visit. (The R.T.S. have a well-known series by Copping at 1d. each. The S.P.C.K. have many good coloured pictures, post card size, at ½d.) She should take care to sit where she can be seen without the invalid having to move her head, and should speak in as low a voice as will comfortably carry. A cheery greeting (though not of the aggressive kind!), a few prayers chosen to fit the special case, and the worker will retire.

In cases of prolonged illness or with the infirm, visits can be longer. It is sometimes helpful to plan out a short course of teaching giving five-minute talks, and leaving the invalid with something to think about which will be "continued in our next." Part of the hardship of illness is the feeling of uselessness; this is the worker's golden opportunity for teaching the power of Intercessory prayer. She can point out its value to the invalid and enlist her help in this way on behalf of special individuals, branches of parochial work, missionary work, etc. No set prayers should be attempted, but the invalid should be encouraged to repeatedly make ejaculatory prayers, mentioning the special objects by name. The worker should make a point of reporting later information regarding the objects about which the invalid has been praying, and specially reporting anything encouraging which her prayers might have been helpful in bringing about.

One important part of the work amongst sick persons is to arouse a desire in their hearts to receive the Blessed Sacrament, and to arrange with the priest the most suitable time. The worker should encourage the sick to receive the Body and Blood of the Lord for the strengthening of the body as well as of the soul. Many priests bring the Reserved Sacrament straight from the Altar, and the service in the sick-room is quite short, lasting only about ten minutes, so that the invalid is not unduly fatigued. The worker should find out from the

priest the exact order of the service he will take, so as to prepare the patient.

It should be her task also to prepare the room, which should be as neat as possible—a small table covered with white cloth, with Cross or sacred picture, lighted candles where desired, and a small jug of cold water for the ablutions.

WORK AMONGST GIRLS.—It is a self-evident fact that girl life is of such infinite value today that every worker should realise that, though perhaps the most difficult, this is the branch of her work which may have the most far-reaching results. Much has been said in criticism of the girl of today, and much misunderstanding has arisen regarding her. But she is capable of great things, and though in her “questing” for happiness, for the fullest self-development and self-expression, she may appear callous, materialistic, or entirely self-absorbed, this is merely on the surface. The worker who penetrates to the depths will find her just as idealistic, as capable of sacrifice, and as full of fine qualities as any of her predecessors in a past age, with a strength of character and spirit of initiative that they often lacked! But the problems concerning Youth today are serious ones. The Church is waking up to realise the appalling leakage of young life that is taking place, and also the vital importance of recapturing it.

Conferences are being held in many dioceses on such questions as, “The Approach to Youth,” “How to Win and Keep Youth.” About seventeen dioceses have started special work in connection with Youth, but of course no specific remedy can be found. It is being generally acknowledged, however, that some of the causes for the leakage are:

(a) Lack of home example, influence and teaching.

(b) Wrong ideas about God, and an entire lack of understanding of what the Church has to offer to young people, and what it requires of them.

(c) That modern Youth has a passion for Reality, and will not acquiesce in a merely conventional religion, nor profess what it does not mean.

Any effort, therefore, to recapture Youth must aim at offering them Truth and Reality. The worker must herself possess a “religion that works.” It is not so much what she *says* as what she *is* that will count in the long run. Three points are essential. She must have such a flame of love to God in her heart that it shows in her life; she must have an immense belief in the young people to whom she goes, and an ardent desire to help them. The matter, after all, is a personal one, and the first contact can only be made through friendship. Once let the girls look upon their worker as a real friend, one who will trust them through thick and thin and expect their best from them, who is “unshockable” and sympathetic, and will “understand” even if she does not agree, and the greater part of the work is done. Once the first contact is made, the rest will follow. Human friendship is often merely the first step to the Divine.

There is real need, however, for a fresh presentment of the Christ and His demands. Special attention must be drawn to His manly qualities: His Courage, the quality of all others that young people admire; His Joy, to which many are so strangely blind; His love of ordinary people; His Sympathy and Understanding. Youth is all ready for sacrifice and devotion should some person or cause be found great enough to draw out what lies deepest. Workers would find the books by Glover and Gray (given in list at the end of this section) a real help in presenting this vivid picture of the Christ. But if Youth is to be thus won, opportunity must be given for greater co-operation on their part.

Youth is best won by Youth itself, and the wise worker will confine her energies to instructing, training, and inspiring small groups, and then sending them out to enlist and enthuse their fellows. This, after all, was our Lord's own method. Teaching also is better given in the form of an address or lecture followed by group discussion, than in the old-fashioned Bible Class. The newer method of the Young People's Fellowship is strongly to be recommended. Responsibility, too, *must* be entrusted to the young, if their best qualities are to

be drawn out. Clubs and classes that are co-operative and self-governed are far better and far more attractive. They should be governed by a committee of members, the worker being merely an advisory member using influence rather than authority. Mistakes will be made, of course, but it is far better for our young people to make mistakes, suffer from them, and so learn wisdom for next time, rather than be hedged into safety by the imposed will of another, with the subsequent discontent and latent rebellion. God Himself respects our free will, and we must respect the free will of those to whom we are sent.

Lack of space forbids further reference to all the newer methods recently being tried in various parts—Youth Missions, Youth Missionary Schools, Parochial Councils of Youth, or Junior Parochial Councils. Every worker would be well advised to apply to the nearest Diocesan Council for Youth for further information regarding these.

CONFIRMATION.—The time of Confirmation is an ideal one for the worker to get into real personal touch with her girls. In some parishes, if she is trained and fitted for the task, the actual preparation is entrusted to her, but many clergy feel this is their one chance of coming into touch with the girlhood of the parish, and therefore one of their most responsible bits of work, and prefer to keep it in their own hands. But in any case the worker will aim at giving all the help she can at this critical time in a girl's life.

Even more important, however, is the time after Confirmation. The lapse of so many of the newly confirmed is one of the saddest facts in Church life. The worker should endeavour to keep in personal touch with her girls. A Guild for Young Communicants is often helpful, and sometimes it is useful to divide the younger members amongst the older, or to ask older friends of the candidates to act as Sponsors or Witnesses at the Confirmation and to give them personal help afterwards. In any case, some definite piece of work should be found for each. Nothing will hold young people to the Church

more than having some responsibility entrusted to them, and the admission to full membership can be marked in no better way.

SEX TEACHING.—In these days when the beauty of sex is being so degraded by the low standards of many of the modern novels, films, plays, etc., one of the greatest tasks before every worker is to restore its beauty and sanctity. It is generally recognised that the mother is the ideal person to give a child the right outlook and information regarding sex matters, but, alas! so few mothers find themselves able to do this. Their own first knowledge was often obtained from an evil source, and the whole subject is still rather smirched in their own minds, and they either do not know the best way to acquaint their children with the truth, or do not feel equal to tackling it.

In these circumstances it is surely the worker's place to play a mother's part. Teaching should be constructive and progressive, and should begin at quite an early age. Opinion differs greatly as to the exact age at which the stages of information should be given. This must really vary with the individual child, but general teaching as to the sacredness of the body, and the duty of learning to control it and to obey the laws of health, can be given to quite small children. Many children who long to possess a pony or a motor-car are quite fascinated by the thought of their personality as a separate entity possessing and controlling the body; thus the first principles of "Mind over Matter" can be learnt, and early habits of control inculcated. Teaching at all stages must, of course, be constructive. In enlightening a girl as to the great creative powers entrusted to her, far more good will come by an appeal to her to consecrate these powers to their true purpose, and so use the new power which she will possess over her boy and men friends by helping them to be their best, than by any deadly warnings against sin and evil and their results.

But in these modern days, when all moral standards seem tottering to the ground, and conception control is being presented as an "angel of light," it is *vital* that

the right ideals should be given to the young. If we are to have really Christian marriage, we must begin by giving high ideals from the first, and leading our youth through a gradually increasing self-control until they are prepared for the sacred intimacies of marriage in which that control will be tested to the utmost. The old idea that in marriage all restraint ceased has largely led to the modern teaching of conception control.

Every parochial worker should give time to study this great subject, that she may be able to give the right ideals and help to her girls, specially in the time of their engagement. It is important that they should realise also the blessing and grace bestowed in the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony, and not be content with the forming of a mere legal tie at a Registrar's Office. Every worker needs also to know how to give the best and wisest help to those who have stumbled on the pathway of life. Advice and help can be obtained from the nearest Social Purity Worker, to whom in difficult cases a parochial worker is always wise to apply. The book "Men, Women, and God" by Gray, and Fr. Longridge's "Preparation for Marriage," are also strongly to be recommended.

WORK AMONGST CHILDREN.—But if "Youth" is to be regarded as one of the greatest assets of the Church, the children are even more important, for Youth depends upon Childhood. The past ten years have completely revolutionised all our ideas regarding the Religious Training of the Young and its vital importance. The worker should be in touch with the Diocesan Organiser for Sunday Schools, whether the schools of the parish come under her care or not. This whole subject is far too great to be even touched upon in a pamphlet of this size, but this is one department of parochial work on which a vast amount of inexpensive literature abounds. The pamphlet No. 3 in this series should be read by every worker, and as many of the newer books as possible. In some parishes the worker takes the training class for young teachers. Here again, such expert help is offered by the Church of England S.S. Institute

or the National Society's Depository, Westminster, that no further reference is needed. Just one or two suggestions might be made as to other ways of helping the children.

1. *Children's Corner in Church.*—This need only be quite simple: an unused corner of the church, near a door, could be chosen; a low shelf or table could be placed against a wall, with a picture above, and vases for flowers which would be supplied by the children; a few suitable prayers for children could be written out, a few books with simple prayers, a picture-book or two, and the corner is complete. Care must be taken that the pictures are suitable, and that there are not too many, though they can be changed from time to time. The Sunday School Organiser would give valuable advice and help if required.

In some parishes the worker meets the children once a week at noon, for corporate prayer, and the children are encouraged to slip in on their way to or from school for a few moments to kneel and say their prayers, or to sit quiet in the Father's House and look at a picture-book. These corners have been found invaluable by those who have tried them. If this is not possible, the worker should arrange a time when the children could meet her in church, so that they could pray together. It has sometimes been found helpful to encourage the mothers to come with their children, or alone to pray for them in the Children's Corner.

2. *Sunday Services.*—In these days of slackening church attendance, it is important that the children should be trained to attend the Sunday morning service. The ideal would be for the children to accompany their parents, but as, alack! the parents are frequently conspicuously absent, provision must be made for the children who come alone. Now if the principles of reverence and worship are to be taught, and a love of God's House deepens in the soul of the children, it is vitally important that they should be able to see and hear all that goes on. The objection to their being placed in the front of the Nave is not only that if they

became restless they might annoy the grown-ups sitting behind, but that they might disturb an extempore preacher. But if the front of the Nave is impossible, at least they should be placed where they can see and hear. Suitable kneelers should be arranged in the children's pews. It is practically impossible for a child to join in any service if his head does not reach to the top of the pew, and he is up against deal boards in a narrow and restricted space! But it is important that children should be able to take an intelligent interest in the service to which they are brought. Should the morning service take the form of a Choral Eucharist, a special children's Eucharist could be arranged, possibly one Saturday morning at 9.30 a.m. A special altar could stand on the Chancel step, so that every child could really see the Celebration of the great Mystery. Another priest, the Sunday School Superintendent, or the worker would kneel in the aisle, and at certain set times would explain, in as low a voice as possible, the stages of the service, preparing the children for what was coming, and also leading them in suitable devotions. It would be wise to arrange for a course of teaching to precede this. "The Little Princess of the Eucharist," by Tennant, is a delightful allegory which might be found useful. Should the Sunday morning service be Matins, a children's Matins could be held, with the same pauses for explanations. By this method children could really be prepared for the regular Sunday worship. These special services need only be held perhaps twice a year or before the Greater Festivals.

Special services once a week during Lent or Advent have often been found most useful. In some cases these are taken by the clergy, but where the worker has had the proper training she has often been called upon to conduct these. It is very important that they should not be taken by the wrong person, or the result may do more harm than good. Every worker would be well advised to spend a week at one of the Summer Schools arranged for Clergy, Sunday School Superintendents and Teachers.

Excellent pamphlets, books, and cards of prayers for children can be obtained from the S.P.C.K., the National Society's Depository, etc. Other books which might be helpful are the following:

For Work Among Women.

New Methods. By Elma Paget. 1s. 6d.

Amongst Adolescents.

Looking Forward. By Leonard Mitchener. 2s.

Youth in World Service. By H. T. Vodden and C. A. Martin. 1s.

The Quest of the Boy. By F. W. W. Griffin. 1s. 6d.

The Adolescent. By J. W. Slaughter. 3s. 6d.

Men, Women, and God. By A. H. Gray. 2s. 6d.

The Christian Adventure. By A. H. Gray. 2s. 6d.

The Jesus of History. By T. R. Glover. 2s. 6d.

Amongst Children.

Introduction to Child Study. By C. Newby. 1s. 6d.

Mary Jane and Harry John. By F. S. M. Bennett. 9d.

Children's Services. S.P.C.K. 2d.

Devotional Reading.

Riches of the House of God. By Flora Abigail McLeod. 2s. 6d.

The Way. By a Priest. 2s. 6d.

How You May Know God. By R. O. P. Taylor. 5s.

Spiritual Direction. By T. W. Pym. 5s.

DANGERS AND DIFFICULTIES OF A WORKER'S LIFE

To be forewarned is to be forearmed, and therefore it may be well to consider a few of the dangers and difficulties which lie in the path of the parochial worker and indeed most women workers.

1. *Allowing the Means to become the End.*—How easy it is to allow the outward success of an organisation to appear more important than the reason for which it was started. How easy to be content with an apparently flourishing Club, Guild, Mothers' Union, or G.F.S., without really considering whether the inward spirit is right, and the *end* really being reached. Is the spirit of Fellowship really deepening through the Club? Are

the ideals of Purity, Friendship, Service becoming apparent in the lives of the members of the G.F.S.? Is there a real growing prayer life and a marked raising of the standard of home life amongst members of the Mothers' Union? Such questions could not fail to show whether it is the *means* or the *end* that we at bottom consider most important.

2. *Allowing Trifles to become of Exaggerated Importance.*—This, I feel, is a peculiar temptation of us womenfolk! Our lives are, necessarily, so occupied with trifles. Details are so important in our peculiar spheres of work. It is the "little touches" which make the difference between a house and a home. But we are subject to the defects of our qualities, and there is real danger lest we attach over-importance to detail and become fussy and fidgety (causing irritation to ourselves and other people!) whilst we allow great issues to pass unnoticed. It is well to get right away from our work at times and view it from a distance; to forget our own corner of the fight, and climb the hill-top and see how the great battle fares.

3. *Running in a Groove.*—This danger is allied to the last—we are learning the power of the great law of Habit. Let us carefully watch lest we become slaves to it, and keep our minds, our methods, and our outlook elastic, being ready to drop an opinion, a method or "way" of doing things when we find a better. Let us remember that we are charged to bring out of our treasury things *new* as well as old.

4. *The Danger of Spiritual Deterioration* is also a very real menace to all those engaged in any form of Christian work, the gradual slackening of the cords of discipline, the gradual slipping down to a lower level of spiritual life. Oftentimes the soul most conscious of this seeks to atone by feverish increase of outward activity! The one necessary precaution is for every worker to live an "ordered life," with fixed hours for devotion, for sleep, for recreation, and work. Every worker will always be confronted with far more work needing to be done than she can possibly undertake, and

the golden maxim for each of us is that it is not the quantity of work we get through that matters, but the quality of what we accomplish.

An annual retreat seems to be an absolutely vital necessity in the life of every worker, and it is well at such times to take stock of our lives, and take note of the "little foxes" that may be "spoiling the grapes."

5. *Depression and Loneliness* are also two foes which every worker, at times, is called upon to face. Depression may come from many causes, overwork, neglect of laws of health, overstrain, etc. It is one of the very surest devices of the devil, and one that trips up the best workers when nothing else will. It may appear at first as an angel of light in the guise of real humility. "I'm afraid I am not the one for this parish," "My work is not successful, I am not really fit for work of this kind," "Someone else would do this far better than I, perhaps I had better give it all up." From that stage one quickly passes to doubts, self pity, and almost despair, and gradually a stage of indifference when it doesn't seem much good trying, and nothing matters very much!

Now the cure for this ill is to watch for the beginnings of it, and to try and remove the cause. If due to over-fatigue, it might be well to spend the next free day in bed with a good novel, or to rest in the morning and spend the remainder of the day in the fresh air. The right use of the free day should really save a worker from this snare. At the same time all women should recognise that for those who are unmarried the years between thirty and forty-five are often difficult. Nearly every woman has an underlying craving for motherhood, and, however devoted to her work, the clamour for a home and children of her own is pretty sure to awake some time within her. It is well to remember, both for ourselves and as a message of comfort for other lonely women, that no powers given to God are wasted. Many women grieve because they feel their best powers are not being used, but a flood of light has been thrown on this subject in recent times. We are learning that physical

motherhood is only one way of using the great creative power entrusted to us, and that many other ways lie open. It is possible, of course, for this vital force to be merely repressed, in which case it is very liable to have disastrous results; but it can, on the other hand, be utilised for great physical, mental, or emotional activities. Every worker should read the chapter on Involuntary Celibacy in Gray's book, "Men, Women, and God," also Miss Royden's "Sex and Common Sense," in order to gain real help for themselves and others on this subject.

Should depression spring from this cause, the exercise of the creative faculty even on such a small scale as the drawing up of a scheme of work or the making of a jumper is often of use. A great truth lies behind the cure for the hump given to us by Rudyard Kipling in "Just So Stories":

Now the cure for this ill is not to keep still
And to frowst with a book by the fire,
But to take a large hoe and a shovel also
And to dig till we gently perspire,
And then you will find that the sun and the wind
And the Djinn of the Garden, too,
Have lifted the hump, the horrible hump,
The hump that is black and blue.

But when depression springs from overstrain, over-concentration on work and on spiritual matters, the cure is to exercise the opposite faculties. Few workers may possess wireless sets themselves, but they abound in every parish, and great joy might be given to a cottage home if the worker asked permission to come and listen to the wireless on her next free day. Nowhere is sanctified common sense more needed than in dealing with this question of depression in ourselves and in other people.

6. *Dryness in Prayer.*—But there is an even deeper cause of depression which must be considered by itself, and that is when it springs from dryness and darkness in prayer. At the outset of the Christian life and in beginning new work, there is often a period of deep spiritual joy. The Presence of God is very real, prayer

is easy, Communion a real delight; but as time advances this passes, and the soul passes through greyness and dulness into the region of darkness and dryness.

Unless this is understood, and recognised as being an advance on the previous stage, there is real danger lest the worker should become depressed and utterly discouraged, possibly shrink from the difficulty of prayer, and become more and more absorbed in outward activities. Let us remember that the dark days are very often "growing days," that this is our opportunity of loving God with our wills, and that steady perseverance through cloud and darkness will bring its own reward. "If winter comes, spring is not far behind," and we shall emerge eventually from our season of darkness on a higher level. For the darkness *will* pass, though at times it seems unending. Let us then learn to sing songs in the night. Sometimes praise and thanksgiving will banish the darkness, and at any time they will help us through.

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