

ience is not more competent to govern a parish than he would be to take charge of an Atlantic liner. With the very best intentions he is almost certain to fall into numberless mistakes, from which he can only extricate himself at the cost of much discomfort and loss of influence. For this reason it is not a common thing in this country to see a clergyman remaining long in the parish to which he was first appointed, and the Church has to pay the penalty which is enacted from failure. How different it might be if men of experience were alone appointed to central positions, and if the districts around them were regarded as being attached to such a common centre. What an economy of time and money would result from the multiplying of curates rather than incumbents.

It is impossible to over estimate the importance to a young man of being for two or three years under a responsible head. Errors resulting from zeal without knowledge, or from pushing some branch of parish work at the expense of all the rest, would soon become things of the past, if the duty of governing were taken out of inexperienced hands and confided only to those who had proved themselves capable of undertaking the task. For example, what can be more difficult to carry out effectively than the duty of pastoral visitation, without which no parish can long maintain its vigor? In the English parishes of which I have spoken, this duty is carefully apportioned according to the particular gifts of individual men; moreover it is regularly supervised. Efficient visitation is understood to include something deeper and higher than the casual gossip of a friendly call; if it does not include "*aliquid Christi*," as one of our bishops has phrased it, there is reason to fear that it may have been time wasted and labor lost. Well do I remember in my first curacy the long list of names which was put into my hands with instructions to visit them all. How hopeless a task it seemed to accomplish any real good without having the slightest clue as to the different families, or any advice how to approach them.

What a wholesome change it was in another parish to be taken out by the rector on a round of visits. As he went along he briefly sketched the character and circumstances of the people we should visit, told me what passage to read, and then himself explained it, and finally clinched the nail by appropriate prayers. In this way we spent a long day, going from house to house among rich and poor, among the careless and the godly, until when I got home and thought the day's work over, light began to break where all had been perplexity, and hopefulness took the place of something like despair. Exactly the same principle holds good as to Sunday Schools, Bands of Hope, Cottage Lectures, and the like.

A poet may be born not made, but a competent parish priest is generally if not always the product of much observation and patient study. Sharp-edged tools should not be trusted in 'prentice hands. The practice of obedience and subordin-

ation is a necessary step towards independent command.

Another prominent feature in Home Missionary work to-day is the increasing share which is committed into the hands of the laity. For an energetic man it is much easier to do a thing himself than to set others in the way of doing it, and yet one-man parishes are not in keeping with the multiplied activities of modern Church life. In addition to which, the layman or laywoman who has something to do is in a much more healthy and contented state than the one who occupies a weekly seat in the "auditorium." The very term is barbarous when used to describe a place in a House of Prayer, and the idea which lies behind it, that people have nothing else to do but listen, (and criticize, peradventure!) is something worse than barbarous, for it is unchurchly and unchristian. "Be ye doers of the Word and not hearers only." The practice of united action must be extended beyond the rector and his curates, to all who have any desire to take up their full privileges and to do their duty.

In that parish where the incumbent "took no chances" with his curates, but supervised their work and taught them how to teach and visit, the vestry window looked out upon a slum so vile and degraded that we used to shut the window closely before our vestry prayers, lest the filthy profanity of the neighboring courts should make it impossible for us to pray. And yet, no sooner was the evening service concluded than a number of our young married people made their way into these very courts and lanes, and there conducted a very brief evangelistic service, in which they generally reproduced what they had learned in church. At the end of our church there were deep and roomy seats in the gallery, not patronized as a rule by regular attendants, but filled Sunday after Sunday by waifs and strays, whose wandering attention had first been caught by the appeals of our Mission Band. The parish with its 9,000 inhabitants was as poor and degraded as a parish could be, but I have seen 229 poor persons present themselves at one time for Holy Communion, and this, not as a mere form, not because it seemed respectable, but for the simple reason that their hungry souls craved for spiritual food, and because they desired humbly and entirely to declare themselves on the Lord's side. Without the help of the laity, work in great cities cannot possibly be carried on efficiently, and amongst the new methods which I would commend to my clerical brethren is that of keeping a list of all parish agencies, and inviting at frequent intervals communicants and new comers and the senior scholars in the Sunday School to choose one or more branches of religious work in which they are ready to take an active part.

If the Church of England does not find employment of some kind for all her sons and daughters, they will either relapse into indifference, which results in spiritual atrophy, or they will be carried off by more energetic and far-seeing competitors.