

man will feel that he is doing his duty—will feel other than discontented with himself unless, as teacher, as visitor, or member of a choir, or as helper among the young, he can point to some definite work that he is doing for the good of others in the Church of God, outside the slightly expanded egotism of his domesticity, or the narrow routine of his profession.

As part of his great work of amelioration, St. Francis of Assisi admitted as Tertiaries into his order multitudes of all ranks, from princes down to peasants, who could not indeed take, nor ought to take, monastic vows, but could yet cheerfully bind themselves by the great self-denying ordinances of the Christian life, and devote themselves to their utmost ability to the service of others. If the Church is to keep pace with the needs of the time, if she is ever to claim and to reclaim the vast masses of her population, we want an ever-increasing army of Tertiaries—of men and women who have said each to their own heart, "Give Him of thine own, of thy time, of thy talents, of thy possession, and of thy service."—*Aid to the Book of Common Prayer*. By R. A. Rogers.

THE S. P. C. K. AND THE MASSES.

It is, we think, pretty widely known, although perhaps not so widely as it ought to be, that the S. P. C. K.—the oldest of our Church Societies, and the parent of some—has for some years past been devoting its attention to the consideration of special means by which the masses may be taught Christian knowledge. Some years ago a plan was inaugurated, which has achieved some success, of producing a literature calculated to satisfy the desires of the working classes, and at the same time to stimulate their moral and mental appetite for better things. Again, they were sought to be captured by appealing to that almost universal instinct of our nature, the love of colours and pictures. Lectures, illustrated by magic-lantern slides, giving an account of the history of the Church, were started, and have been attended by thousands of people. By this agency many thousands of the working classes were, for the first time in their lives, brought to realise something of the Church's past history, and were thus unconsciously prepared to receive the lessons of Christianity. Still the Society was not satisfied. To be in complete touch with working men, there have been many persons who think it necessary that such should be appealed to by those who had been working men. The problem, then, is to send men of the people to the people with tidings of the Gospel; and if these evangelists are to be a maximum power for good, it is vital that they should be fittingly trained and prepared for their important work. The S. P. C. K. grasped the situation, and after very careful and anxious consideration, initiated and decided to try the following plan, which appears to be a step towards the more complete evangelization of the masses, and is, in our judgment, a scheme of great promise. To put this plan to the test the Society have just voted and set aside £5,000. They propose to establish an Institution in the east of London for the systematic instruction and training of lay workers. In this term evangelists, lecturers, lay readers, Sunday-school teachers, district visitors, and other workers are all included. It has for many years been obvious that the value of lay work of this description would be greatly increased if the workers were efficiently trained. Much of their zeal and earnestness, owing to the lack of proper instruction, is unable to be utilized, and some of it is misdirected. To strengthen the parochial clergyman in his labours by giving him well-trained workers, instead of workers with no technical training at all, is one of the chief objects of the institution. The students are to be both resident and non resident. The class from which

they will be drawn will be principally that of genuine working men, as well as clerks and others. Ten resident students will be admitted at one time, and the period of training will not exceed a year. A warden and sub-warden will be at the head of the Institution. A hostel, where students will be able to get cheap board and lodging, will be attached to it. The management will be vested in a Council, with the Bishop of Bedford as president.

It will be seen that the scheme is so far a very comprehensive one; but it may be assumed from the wording of the plan, as it appears in the Society's Monthly Report for February, that the Society regard the institution as an experiment: and if the hopes which are entertained of its success as an evangelising agency should be realized, it is not at all improbable that similar institutions will be set up in other parts of London, and possibly in other great cities—assuming, of course, that funds are supplied to the Society by Churchmen to enable it to carry out so grand a programme.

Classes for the instruction of lay workers, in connection with the institution, will be organized, we notice, at various centres in London. The Society proposes at the same time to put forth renewed efforts in its literary departments. It will issue a special literature for circulation amongst the lowest classes in the slums, and in other districts of London which have achieved, owing to their poverty and crime, a widespread notoriety.

These are great undertakings for any society, and especially for a society which is not a wealthy one. The income of the S. P. C. K. is not large, and it has always been the practice of the Society to spend the alms of Churchmen on the needs of the day, rather than to build up endowments for unborn generations. Thus it is to-day—nearly 200 years after its foundations—as dependent as it ever was upon the alms of its members for the means to carry on its great variety of work. Nevertheless, with a faith which savours more of the first than of the nineteenth century, it does not hesitate to inaugurate, as the needs of the day require, new and costly undertakings, which may, and we hope will, prove to be fraught with many blessings for our toiling and suffering masses.—*Church Bells*.

PREPARATION FOR PUBLIC WORSHIP.

There may be those who have no need of any special preparation for the worship of God in His house. Such people live in an atmosphere of holiness by which they are kept continually fit for worship. Worship is their normal condition. We know a few, a very few, such men and women; but we know, too, that they are not a common product. Such people are usually old in years and service; for holiness is a plant of slow growth, the product of a long life. Most of us are painfully aware that we need to be ushered to our hours of real worship through a vestibule of greater or less length. Whether care is always taken to ensure this preparation, is another matter.

Two or three things are not likely to advance our fitness for the services of the Lord's house. Sunday may be a day of rest, but the best rest will not usually be secured by such an indulgence in morning naps as to involve haste in the toilet and fear of being late at church. The state of mind thus induced is hardly worshipful.

Nor does the Sunday newspaper afford the best food for the morning hours, and this for more reasons than one. We need to get away from the cares and the pleasures of the week; and these papers are filled with the very things that we have been thinking and talking about for six days. The business man turns instinct-

ively to the Prices Current and the reports of the Stock Exchange; and the young men and boys are as naturally drawn to the sporting news; while their sisters find their first attraction in the items of society and the fashions.

One needs no surer evidence of what has been engaging the attention of any person during the week than is afforded by the part of the newspaper to which he is first attracted. While this by no means exhausts the counts against these papers, it is sufficient evidence of their unsuitableness to the Sabbath.

Nor is the making of an elaborate toilet the best way to prepare for church. Time spent in the adjustment of an "Easter hat," or in the fastidious arrangement of necktie, maybe an excellent prelude for the critical examination of other hats and ties, but it can hardly be credited with lifting the soul to a more worshipping frame. Simple dress is best suited to the Lord's day and to His house for more reasons than one.

But beside these things to be left undone are those to be done. And any suggestions will be very defective that do not go a long way back of Sunday morning. The spirit of worship is not something to be put off and on at will. He to whom it has been foreign all the week will seek for it in vain on Sunday. No man can cheat his fellows six days and worship God on the seventh; and it is equally certain, though not always equally apparent, that we cannot give ourselves to the service of mammon in any form through the week and then turn to the service of God without being a little awkward in the unfamiliar duty. The service and worship of the Lord's day are to be a natural fruition of the work of the week instead of a plant of entirely different order. Psalm singing and praying are a poor substitute for doing justly, and loving mercy, and walking humbly. They may afford an outwardly beautiful and thoroughly orthodox and respectable piety, but they are not pure religion and undefiled in the sight of God. The good Sabbath must be preceded by the good week.

Given the week of reasonably good living, as good a week as most Christians attain, there is still needed on Sunday some additional preparation for public worship. Our business may have been thoroughly honest and respectable; it may have been conducted in a truly Christian spirit; still it has been business involving more or less of earthly and sordid care and anxiety, and we need by some baptism to purify ourselves from the stains of it before entering the peculiar presence of the All Pure.

Obviously the true preparation for coming to God consists in coming to Him. The expression may be a paradox, but the truth is straightforward. We come by more private and personal communion into a fit heart and mind for social worship. Studying the Bible is a great help to this; and study that has been carried through the week days finds its natural completion in the devotional reading of Sunday morning. But after all, private prayer is the one thing indispensable.

Many people have little time on this morning for retirement and quiet meditation. Mothers who must have the little ones ready for church and Sunday school know how quickly the hours and minutes go by, and how hard it is to find any time for themselves. It is a good thing for these and all other burdened ones that prayer is not restricted to silence and retirement. God sometimes accepts labour as prayers very abundantly.

A prayerful heart will find the ear of the Father at any time; and yet, where it can be found, a little time spent in isolation, and alone with Him will be productive of the fullest results.

If all professing Christians who compose our congregations were really prepared for the exacting duty of Divine worship, how much