

so becoming rich. "Why then," people will naturally ask themselves, "should the Sisters be there?" And the reply to such a question is this:—that they have placed themselves at the disposal of their Divine Master, and see an end, a purpose of *His*, which they can realize by going there. Such a reply can hardly fail to give, to even the most debased and careless, a new conception of the purpose of life, and a higher ideal of the spirit in which its works ought to be done.

2. Woman is the symbol of the Church of God. In the Book of Revelation, the form and likeness of *Woman* is again seen, as representative of the "great mystery," of the Kingdom. (Rev. xix. 7; xxi. 9; xxii. 17. Eph. v. 32.) The Church of God is called the "Bride" of Christ; the idea representing weakness and dependence, joined with strength of devotion and self-surrender.

This heavenly reality, the "Sister" is especially called to represent; though, in speaking of this aspect of the life, we must be careful as to our phraseology.

In the Sisterhood life, there is an *accentuating* of that calling which in truth belongs to the whole Church, to be the "Bride" of Christ.

The Sisters are not so "Brides" of Christ as to exclude the rest of the Church, for the whole Church is the "Bride;" but their part is, especially, to put forward this side of the deep Christian verity. As one part of the Church represents the priesthood of the whole Church, another the royalty, another the teaching, and another the home-life, the family,—which is a shadow upon earth of the Trinity above—so the Sisterhood life represents, and brings out into sharper relief, in behalf of—with—for—and in the name of—the whole Church, that calling of the whole Church of Christ to be "His holy Bride;" to be absolutely His, at His disposal; to feel the deepest attachment and yield the most entire devotion to Him; to live for Him, and for Him only.

One great want in the Church of to-day, is the recognition of vocations; depending on the wealth of God the Holy Spirit, Who is "dividing to every man severally as He will:" the recognition of "holy estates;" such as the "holy estate" of matrimony, and also the "holy estate" of those who are entirely and specially dedicated to our Lord, as "Sisters."

Our Blessed Lord, as He passes by, calls some with one tone of His Voice, and some with another; one soul has to follow Him in one way, the next in quite a different way;—as when He was on earth. We are, each of us, to answer to the call given to us, readily and simply; without any jealousy, or comparison of it with that given to others: heartily recognising and following our own vocation.

This vocation is pointed out, in the case of all whose desire is to serve God, first by certain providential leadings, and then by an inner tendency,—at first, it may be, of feeling, rather than of will and purpose,—towards a special line of service.

We are not to say that one vocation is "higher" than another; there is no need whatever of comparisons; but we are to recognize and heartily realize, alike, *e.g.* the vocation for the "dedicated" life, and the vocation for marriage.

There is the life of the mistress of a Christian household, in her own house; and there is that of the "handmaid of the Lord," in His Church; one who simply belongs to her Lord, for this special work; attached to Him in this special way, as one of His "Body-guard." She is to represent the Church of Christ, in the relation of the Church to her Lord as "Bride," professedly and professionally. All the members of His Church belong equally to their Lord. Yet, as some are called professionally to the Priesthood, so also it should be accepted as natural, that some shall, specially and representatively, belong to our Lord in this parti-

cular way; having only one thing to do, like Anna in the temple, to wait upon their Lord.

There is quite enough said in Holy Scripture to make us see that there is a place, in the corporate Christian life, for the special vocation.

These chosen ones form His Court, round His Sacred Person. They bring all that they touch, practically, into connection with Him Who is the Centre of the spiritual order. They are to win the provinces of Home-life, of Art, of Music, and such like, for Him Who is "worthy." They do what others do, whether it is teaching, music, nursing, or anything else, as belonging to Him; as His alone, and only His; in His Name, and for His Sake; simply because He has need of it, for the general good of His Church, and in order to bear witness to His universal Lordship over all.

We, in South Africa, know practically that, in such a country as ours, we must have the help of women who have this high calling; we must have some, of whom it is understood that they are not open to an engagement of marriage. Ordinarily, every one round about us is either married or going to be married; the country itself cannot provide us with disengaged people, having leisure at their disposal for the necessary work of the Church.

But, apart from this practical necessity, there is a special power in their being known to be the property, the possession of the Lord; the "lot" of the Lord, which consecrates the whole people. There is no reflection cast upon the rest of the Body, as if they might not be quite as "religious" as Sisters. But the "lot" of the Lord are His special possession and property, set apart for His service; the settled order and plan of their lives being arranged, definitely, with a view to His work and His worship; which is indeed the business of all, but for which so many say that they have "no time."

During our Synod at Bloemfontein, several representatives of our busy and occupied laity, including some from the Diamond Fields, were present at the Synod Service held in the Sisterhood Chapel. I remember how they seemed to feel the blessedness of realising that, while they themselves had so little time for prayer, this continual worship was being offered on their behalf. Such people, while doing their best to make room for prayer in their own busy lives,—for none can be dispensed from it themselves,—are likely to find comfort in the thought that they are represented by the "Sisters;" that the Lord is holding His Court, and His Word is being fulfilled, that "in every place incense shall be offered unto Him, and a pure offering," all day long; that the perpetual worship of which the Psalmist speaks is a reality.

Thus, through this portion of her members, living in community, the Church may offer to Him this devotion; she may keep up a regular round of worship and homage; wherein, though there may not always be a conscious warmth and glow of devotion—a special enjoyment of religious services,—she is foreshadowing on earth, and preparing for, the life of Heaven itself, where, while "they rest from their labours," they "rest not day nor night," in their song of praise.

But, besides this direct worship of their Lord, the Sisters are continually occupied in *Prayer and Intercession*, for the whole Church, and for the special needs of individuals. And this is one of the most powerful agencies by which the Church according to the will of her Lord, leavens the world, and influences the destinies of mankind. Simply to stand round the Lord, and be in His Presence, is in itself a source of power.

And then, there is the actual material *Work* itself; work to be done for Him, with hand or heart or mind.

This work is waiting on every side, for those who will do it. It does not so much matter what the work is; this will vary from time to

time, according to the gifts of the individual, and the needs of the Church. The Sisters are, in His strength, to win every province of social life to Him, by the exercise of all the various gifts and powers which have been entrusted to them.

At Bloemfontein, for instance, our Sisterhood, in one department, is occupied in giving to the daughters of the Colonists an education of the highest class. As much attention is given to this as possible. We aim at affording to the pupils the opportunity of attaining a high standard of excellence, for example, in music, with a view to its bearing on Church work.

It may be difficult to some, to see what this has to do with "Mission work." But our idea, in High Class education, is this: to reach the minds of those who will have the most important homes, as centres of influence, in the future. And surely it is obvious that, if the women who represent the Church are to make the Church's influence felt to the fullest extent, they must be able to give all that this age requires. We want people to feel that they need not go anywhere but to the feet of Christ, in order to gain all that they really need. Art, Science, Literature, Culture of every sort,—every branch of human attainment—must be sanctified, by being practised in and to Him.

"O Lord our Lord, and spoiler of our foes,
There is no light but Thine; with thee all beauty glows."

Now, if this is to be fully done, we must have, for the doing of it, lives wholly dedicated to the work. And if this Community life is to be really useful to the Church, it must be formally and frankly accepted by the Church. There must be something more than the woman merely dedicating herself, in her own will and heart. The Church must formally recognise her purpose, and provide a test for her. The personal dedication may be as real and true, before God, in secret; but some formal expression is needed of this dedication.

(To be Continued)

PAROCHIAL MISSION TO THE JEWS.

In many of the Dioceses in B.N.A. the offertories at the Good Friday services are by direction of the Diocesan appropriated to the funds for the Conversion of the Jews, and for the maintenance of the work of the Church amongst them. In this connection we would call the special attention of our readers to the letter of the Rev. J. D. Cayley, M.A., Toronto, Secretary of the "Parochial Missions to the Jews Fund," to be found in our "Correspondence" columns. At the annual meeting of the Society held in London, Eng., and at which Bishop Blyth was present; he Bishop of Salisbury presided, and the following resolutions were passed:

Moved by the Bishop of Bedford, "That God's ancient people, the Jews—particularly those in England—have a special claim on the practical sympathy of English Christians."

Moved by Bishop Blyth, "That special efforts be made on behalf of the Fund for Alexandria."

Moved by Rev. C. J. Ridgeway, "That the 'Parochial Missions to the Jews Fund,' which is administered in accordance with the doctrine and discipline of The Church of England, and whose work has been already much blessed by God deserves increased support at the hands of all faithful members of The Church."

We want 10,000 subscribers; who will help in securing them?