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OF WOMEN (THEOLOGY) -- B. A. H. 1
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GUTHRIE FOR ADVANCED STUDIES
AND THE UNIVERSITY

WOMEN and the CHURCH

A TEXTBOOK & A MANUAL
for Women's Organizations



By Louise Miller Novotny

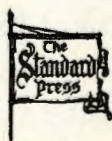


WOMEN AND THE CHURCH

*A Manual and Textbook for
Women's Organizations*

... BY ...

LOUISE MILLER NOVOTNY



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
	PREFACE	5
I	WHAT IS WOMAN'S WORK IN THE CHURCH?	7
II	LYDIA	16
III	DORCAS	25
IV	PRISCILLA	33
V	MARY	42
VI	EUNICE	51
VII	PHŒBE	60
VIII	WOMEN AS CALLERS	70
IX	WOMEN AS TEACHERS	79
X	THE WOMEN'S BIBLE CLASS	90
XI	THE LADIES' AID SOCIETY	101
XII	THE MISSIONARY SOCIETY	113
XIII	THE DEACONESS	124
XIV	THE WOMEN'S COUNCIL	133
XV	WOMEN IN OTHER ACTIVITIES	141
XVI	"SHE HATH DONE WHAT SHE COULD"	150
	"THE LADIES' AID" (poem)	157
	BENEDICTIONS	159

PREFACE

Women have a distinctive and indispensable place in the work of the church of Christ.

No history of the primitive church would be complete without the ministry of the loving hands and hearts of Lydia, Dorcas, Priscilla, Mary, Eunice, Phœbe and their kind.

The church of today would be poor indeed without their counterpart. Many a congregation would have closed its doors or failed in its purposes without the sacrificial labors of certain women.

It is passing strange, therefore, that our religious literature has been so devoid of helps distinctively designed to make women's work in the church more efficient and resultful. Louise Miller Novotny has rendered a much needed service in preparing "Women and the Church"—a manual and a text-book for women's organizations.

Mrs. Novotny writes out of her experience as an active church worker. So practical and helpful has that experience been to schools and conferences of church workers that she has been persuaded to prepare this book.

As a text the book naturally falls into two parts—seven lessons on the women of the New Testament (1-7), seven lessons on women's work in the modern

Preface

church (8-14), with additional related materials (sixteen chapters in all). Local church groups, adapting the course to their distinctive needs, may reduce the number of essential lessons to twelve or thirteen if so desired.

As a manual it will prove invaluable to any church library.

There may be occasional dissent from the author's views on women's place in the church, but her book as a whole can not fail to bring new life and new dignity to this important phase of church activity.

JAMES DEFORREST MURCH.

CHAPTER I

WHAT IS WOMAN'S WORK IN THE CHURCH?

Women have always occupied a unique position in the work of the kingdom. They have been and are still serving in the lowly positions with little or no recognition being given to the work they accomplish with so much love and faithfulness. Jesus accepted the ministration of feminine hands for Himself and His apostles, as women lovingly labored for them on their preaching tours.

The Word of God is filled with examples of the labors of godly women. Since we turn to the Bible to find the pattern of our Christian faith and practice, it is fitting that we seek there the elements fundamental to women's work in the church today.

The Old Testament has its Eve, its Rachel, its Deborah and its Ruth—but somehow we feel a closer kinship to the women of the New Testament. These women, with whom we are bound in blessed Christian fellowship, should be our examples in character and service.

WOMEN OF THE EARLY CHURCH

In searching the New Testament for examples after which the women's work of the church might

Women and the Church

be patterned, we turn to the Book of Acts, that book which tells of the early beginnings of the church. There we find the names of several women who must have been most influential in the early church of Christ.

Dorcas (Acts 9: 36-43).

Tabitha, by interpretation Dorcas, was a needle-woman of Joppa, who served her Lord by ministering to the poor, the sick, the hungry and the discouraged. She, who gave her talents to the Lord, was blessed by the widows. The Ladies' Aid Societies and Women's Guilds of today stand as a beautiful memorial to her.

Mary (Acts 12: 12-20).

Mary, the mother of John Mark, opened her home for the Christian brethren to meet together to pray for Peter, who was a prisoner. Hospitality marked the early disciples.

Lydia (Acts 16: 12-16).

The heart of Lydia was opened by Paul's preaching, and immediately after her baptism she desired to be of service.

Priscilla (Acts 18: 24-28).

Priscilla will always be known as the woman who helped her husband correct the false teaching of an able evangelist.

What is Woman's Work in the Church?

Phœbe (Rom. 16: 1, 2).

This loyal, faithful servant of the church at Cenchrea, was commended very highly by Paul to the church at Rome.

Eunice and Lois (2 Tim. 1: 5).

Paul congratulated Timothy upon being the son of a Christian mother, who also had a mother faithful to her God.

"Those Women" (Phil. 4: 3).

Paul, in writing to the church at Philippi, that church which he loved and of which Lydia was the first charter member, used these words, "I entreat thee also, true yoke fellow, help those women which labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellow laborers, whose names are in the book of life."

WOMEN'S WORK IN THE EARLY CHURCH

We know what some of these women mentioned did in the early church, but when we read Phil. 4: 3 we naturally ask two questions: "How did those women at Philippi labor with Paul in the gospel?" And in order to answer that question we must ask another question: "Just what was Paul's work in the gospel?" The answer to the last question will naturally be the answer to the first question.

Let us consider, therefore, the work to which Paul was called.

Women and the Church

Paul's Commission (Acts 26: 18, 19).

The commission which Paul received on the road to Damascus from Jesus Christ was "to open their [Gentile] eyes and to turn them from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me." And Paul tells King Agrippa that he was "not disobedient unto the heavenly vision." This most certainly means that he executed the desire of the Lord as expressed in that vision.

What Did Paul Preach? (Acts 26: 20; 24: 25).

He told King Agrippa that he showed the Gentiles "that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance."

Before Felix, "he reasoned of righteousness, temperance and judgment to come."

In Antioch he and Barnabas taught and preached the Word of the Lord, with many others also. He preached, taught, reasoned, disputed and persuaded in the many towns he visited. He was a personal evangelist.

Where Did Paul Preach?

Paul preached in the synagogues, but not there exclusively. He taught the Word of God in the home of Justus. He disputed with those whom he met daily in the market place. He says he not only taught publicly, but from house to house.

What is Woman's Work in the Church?

"Those Women."

Now just how did those women labor with Paul in the gospel? These various activities of Paul's must have been shared alike by his coworkers—men and women. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3: 28).

Yes, they taught as Priscilla surely did. They helped the needy as did Dorcas. They opened their homes for preaching services and prayer meetings, as did Mary, the mother of John Mark. They used their fine Christian knowledge to train their children and to inspire them to do a great work for the Master, as did Lois. And they performed the duties necessary for the setting of the Lord's Table; and also those, best done by a woman, in connection with baptism. Most students agree that this must have been Phoebe's work.

And while nothing is said about the work of Lydia, yet, after a careful study, many are inclined to believe that she had no little part in making the church at Philippi the great church that it was.

Teaching.

While the teaching in the Bible schools and homes should not be done entirely by women, for it is a work to be equally shared, yet there is a need in the church today for women to prepare themselves so well for the position of teachers that, like Priscilla,

Women and the Church

they can easily detect the teaching of false doctrine and can tactfully correct it. So, with Priscilla as the example, the church women of today may feel assured that teaching the Word of God is one piece of work that can be done by them.

Helping the Needy.

Helping the needy and the discouraged has been called by some one "Woman's Great Task of Happiness," and truly it is just that, for the woman who has Christ in her heart is never happier than when she is bent upon some task for the needy. We look to Dorcas of old as the example for the women of the church today. What a fine example she is!

Training Children in the Home.

The thoughtful folk of our land view with alarm the irreverence and indifference of very young children to those things which have always been sacred, and many have censured the home for its failure to teach Christian standards of conduct. Eunice and her mother Lois give us a fine picture of a mother instilling in her child the faith that Paul rejoiced to see. There is a real teaching work for every Christian mother in her own home.

Hospitality.

In this day of haste and efficiency we are likely to grow careless in our hospitality, and the fine art of entertaining is likely to be lost. Therefore it is well to remember that a prayer meeting was held in

What is Woman's Work in the Church?

the home of Mary; that Lydia urged Paul and his companions, who were strangers to her, to be her guests, and that Priscilla and Aquila, helpers of Paul, had a church in their house. The women in our churches may find a lovely bit of work by following the admonition of Paul: "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels" (Heb. 13: 2).

Servant of the Church.

The heart of every Christian woman must thrill when she reads the first verse of the sixteenth chapter of Romans. Paul, writing to the church, says:

"I commend unto you Phoebe our sister, which is a servant of the church at Cenchrea." A servant of the church! Serving the church! Ministering to the church! These beautiful words stand, after two thousand years, a fitting memorial to a Christ-loving and a Christ-serving woman. What an honor to Phoebe! And what a wonderful example she is to the Christ-loving women in our churches today!

Today thousands and thousands of women rejoice that they are able to serve their Lord with loving hands and minds and hearts. The Master expects each woman who bears His name to labor while it is yet day.

Women and the Church

We turn the sacred pages
That we might in our search
Learn how the women labored
In the early Christian church.

Priscilla served as teacher
Of the gospel long ago;
Kind Dorcas helped the widows,
And did their sorrows know.

Cenchrea's Phoebe served her Lord
In the church located there;
While Mary opened wide her house
That all might be in prayer.

As Lydia sold the purple
In the busy mart,
She told of Christ, the Saviour,
Who had opened wide her heart.

To Timothy, a loving son,
Good Eunice did impart
The faith her mother Lois
Had instilled within her heart.

And other women labored
In the gospel work with Paul,
To keep the faith, once given,
To never let it fall.

All honor to those women
Who did such noble work,
Who faced each duty as it came,
And never tried to shirk.

What is Woman's Work in the Church?

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

FACTUAL QUESTIONS

1. Who was Lydia?
2. For what special work was Dorcas noted?
3. Who was the Mary mentioned in this lesson?
4. What was Priscilla's work in the kingdom?
5. Who was Eunice? Lois?
6. What office did Phœbe hold in the local church?
7. What was Paul's commission?
8. In what ways did he execute this commission?
9. Where did Paul preach?
10. How did the women assist Paul in his work?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Some translations of the Bible give Phœbe the honor of being a deaconess. Are the terms servant and deaconess synonymous?
2. Would it be better if the Bible schools had more men in their teaching ranks?
3. Do you think "those women" of whom Paul speaks might have preached?
4. Is the work of women in our churches receiving more recognition today than formerly?
5. Should not women aspire to plan the work as well as execute it after it is planned by the men?

CHAPTER II

LYDIA

ACTS 16: 13-15.—And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither.

And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.

And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.

EXPLANATION AND COMMENT

The winning of the first European to the Master's kingdom would be of interest to Christian women, but it is doubly so because that person was a woman, Lydia of Philippi, who was also the first charter member of that great church at Philippi—the church that Paul must have loved, for we find no word of rebuke or disappointment in his letter to them. Let us restudy some Scripture words and phrases written about this lovely Christian character, Lydia.

And on the sabbath . . . spoke unto the women. It seems that there were not enough Jewish people in this city of Philippi to afford a synagogue, but the women who loved God had made a place by the river where they met to worship on the Sabbath day. This is the scene which met Paul's eyes on this par-

Lydia

ticular Sabbath. And while the man of Paul's vision was not there, he did not hesitate to speak of Jesus to these faithful women.

And a certain woman named Lydia . . . of Thyatira. These few words tell us that Lydia was likely a Gentile proselyte, and a native of the city of Thyatira, famous for the dyes used for the robes of kings and princes.

A seller of purple. Because Lydia was a seller of purple, we naturally conclude that she was a successful business woman possessed of considerable wealth, which would be necessary to carry on a business such as this. And when we think of her as being successful at a time when there was great opposition to women being in business, we know that she must have possessed great energy and executive ability. "She perceiveth that her merchandise is good, her candle goeth not out by night. . . . Strength and honor are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come" (Prov. 31: 18, 25).

Which worshipped God. This certain woman, being a Gentile, must have been a seeker for truth, in that she worshiped the one God of the Jews, while all about her the Gentiles were worshiping many gods. She was likely a proselyte to the Jewish faith. She must have said in her heart, "One thing have I desired, that I will seek after." And because of that great longing, she was found in the place of prayer that Sabbath.

Heard us. The women in this faithful group of worshipers must have been startled to have strange

Women and the Church

men appear at their meeting. But, hospitable as they were, they heard what the men had to say. Little did Lydia realize that her hunger was to be completely satisfied. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" (Matt. 5: 6).

Whose heart the Lord opened to give heed unto the things spoken by Paul. It must have taken several hours for Paul to tell that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son," Jesus, who was born as foretold by the prophets; "how that Christ died for our sins according to the scripture; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures; and that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve; after that he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto the present, but some are fallen asleep. After that he was seen of James: then all of the apostles, and the last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time" (1 Cor. 15: 3-8).

As Paul, in his matchless way, told the wonderful story of the gospel, the Lord opened the heart of her who had been seeking for that which would satisfy her longing, and she must have listened with the growing conviction that at last she was about to drink of the water of life. Yes, Lydia heeded. May it be said of us who worship the true God that we, too, give heed.

And when she was baptized. This certain woman, trained as she was in her business to recognize value

Lydia

and truth, made her decision promptly. She did not say, "We shall talk it over, and let you know in a few days what we shall do." Immediately she knew that her search was ended. In all probability she was baptized that very hour, for, accustomed in her position as an executive to have obedience, she was ready to obey her Lord in baptism.

"And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart" (Jer. 29: 13).

And her household. Just who were included in this household we do not know; it may have been the members of the family, the household servants, or those connected with her in her business; or perhaps all of these. But we do feel that her household respected her judgment and knew that she could be depended upon to see the true value of any proposition. "She looketh well to the ways of her household"—a good example for women everywhere.

If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and abide there. Lydia desired to know a great deal more about this Jesus of whom she had just learned. She felt that it would be sufficient reward for her faithfulness to the Lord, if these missionaries would be honored guests in her home. So she not only invited them in, but asked them to abide, that is, to remain for a long time.

And she constrained us. The verb "constrained" is found but twice in the New Testament. It is a strong word which implies the overcoming of reluc-

Women and the Church

tance. Paul evidently was reluctant to impose on the hospitality of Lydia; but Lydia, desiring to learn more about Jesus, overcame his reluctance. There in the quiet of her home we think of Paul and Luke telling about Jesus and the many things He did. And there Lydia and her household caught the vision of service for the Master.

Surely it is not hard to think that when Paul wrote his letter to the Philippian church, he had Lydia and her sister workers in mind when he said, "I entreat thee also, true yoke fellow, help those women which labored with me in the gospel . . . whose names are in the book of life" (Phil. 4: 3).

CHARACTER STUDY

"I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now" (Phil. 1: 3-5).

These words, written by Paul to the church at Philippi, cause us to think of Lydia, the first European convert, and the first charter member of the Philippian church. Let us study the character of this great woman.

1. *She was a seeker after the truth.*

The very fact that Lydia, a Gentile, was a worshiper of the Lord in a prayer place on the Sabbath tells us that she was not satisfied with the gods of the Gentiles, and had accepted the God of the Jews. David must have thought of such persons when he

Lydia

wrote, "Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart" (Ps. 119: 2), for the story of Lydia convinces us that she did seek wisdom and knowledge of the Lord with her whole heart.

2. She was a woman of wealth.

The articles which Lydia sold were very expensive and she would need quite a large capital to carry on such an establishment. We like to think of her as using her wealth in the right way. Money in itself is not evil, but "the love of money is the root of all evil" (1 Tim. 6: 10).

3. She was a business woman.

It was no easy matter to be a business woman in those days, when there was great opposition to such. Because of this opposition and her undoubted success, we can but conclude that Lydia was a charming woman of great energy and extraordinary executive ability.

4. She was a woman of great influence.

Under the influence of Lydia her household was baptized when she was. What was back of this influence? Her household had long before this learned to depend upon Lydia's judgment; they knew that she could instantly discern the true from the false in any teaching. And when she accepted Jesus as the Christ, they immediately wanted to follow her example. Such is the reward of being dependable.

Women and the Church

5. She was obedient.

Thinking of the character of Lydia, we conclude that every one in her household was obedient to her. She very likely ruled with love, as the strongest rulers do. But because she knew the value of obedience in temporal things, she was ready to be obedient to the voice of God. Although a woman of wealth and great influence, she was willing to do what Paul assured her was necessary if she were to partake of the Bread of Life.

6. She was humble.

Truly there is no garment that becomes the Christian as the robes of humility. These robes Lydia wore with great honor. This is one of the traits which made her a woman of great influence. Christian women everywhere could be the recipients of that great promise, "God . . . giveth grace to the humble," if they would but clothe themselves with humility.

7. She was hospitable.

Lydia was a dispenser of hospitality—that fine art which is almost lost in these days of hurrying and hustling. Somehow we feel that the hospitality of Lydia was a forerunner of the generosity of the Philippian church to Paul. Christian women should remember the advice found in the thirteenth chapter of Hebrews, "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers; for thereby some have entertained angels unawares."

Lydia

8. She was courageous.

There can be no doubt that Lydia was a woman of courage, for in opening her home to these strangers who were preaching an unpopular religion, she would not only be criticized, her business endangered, but her life might be taken. But none of these thoughts daunted Lydia as she made them her honored guests. And when Paul and Silas were taken from the prison, where they had been placed because of their teaching, the Scriptures tell us they went directly to the house of Lydia, where they were comforted. Lydia was indeed a courageous witness for the gospel.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

FACTUAL QUESTIONS

1. Who was Lydia?
2. What was her occupation?
3. Why might one conclude that she was a woman of wealth?
4. Why was there no synagogue in Philippi?
5. What kind of city was Philippi?
6. Why was the place of prayer on the river bank?
7. Who was baptized with Lydia?
8. Who were Paul's companions on this journey?
9. Why was Paul reluctant to accept Lydia's hospitality?
10. Why did Paul remember with joy the Christians at Philippi?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How might Lydia have served her Master in her local church?
2. In what ways can we serve as Lydia did?
3. How was it possible for Lydia to combine her business with the work of the Lord?

Women and the Church

4. Do we use every opportunity to witness for our Master?
5. How was Lydia able to judge the truth and sincerity of Paul's message?
6. Are we ever called upon to judge the truth of false teachings?
7. Why was Paul's presence in the house of Lydia helpful to these newly won converts?
8. Why was it advantageous to Paul and the church for him to be in this house?*
9. What characteristic do you think is the most pronounced in Lydia?
10. As we go about our work for the Master are we clothed in the garments of humility?

Yes, Lydia sold the purple robes,
For royalty to wear,
But garments of humility
Gave her charm most rare.

And as we do our little tasks
With great fidelity,
May we, too, wear becoming robes
Of sweet humility.

CHAPTER III

DORCAS

ACTS 9:36-43.—Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did.

And it came to pass in those days, that she was sick, and died: whom when they had washed, they laid her in an upper chamber.

And forasmuch as Lydda was nigh to Joppa and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent unto him two men, desiring him that he would not delay to come to them.

Then Peter arose and went with them. When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and shewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them.

But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning him to the body said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up.

And he gave her his hand, and lifted her up, and when he had called the saints and widows, presented her alive.

And it was known throughout all Joppa; and many believed in the Lord.

And it came to pass that he tarried many days in Joppa with one Simon a tanner.

EXPLANATION AND COMMENT

We are all familiar with the story of Dorcas, recorded in the ninth chapter of Acts. Yet, because we are so familiar with it, we may have overlooked some of the pertinency of the account, and it would be well to restudy some of the words and phrases.

A certain disciple. In the city of Joppa lived Dorcas, a disciple, a believer, a follower, a learner. She believed that Jesus was the Christ and, believing,

Women and the Church

she must have said with that other disciple, "Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest." A disciple is a learner. Jesus said, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me" (Matt. 11: 29). The works of this disciple testify that she had learned of Him; she had "maintained good works" and had learned the real meaning of "Love one another as I have loved you." She learned that her Master came to minister to the needy. That was enough for Dorcas. She was a follower in deed and in truth.

Full of good works. This disciple believed in the teaching of the Master so much that she was not content to be a passive follower, but must put His teachings into action. She desired to show her love in a practical way and found a great joy and peace in obeying the Master's words. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matt. 25: 40). She consecrated herself and her talents to the Lord. Her work was not done in a half-hearted, grumbling way, but cheerfully and sincerely as unto the Lord. She had "arrayed herself with good works." There were not a few things to her credit, but so many that the Scripture account says she was "full of good works."

And almsdeeds which she did. Evidently Dorcas did not aspire to be a social climber—to give to those who could return the favor. She was full of almsdeeds—literally meaning giving and working for the poor. The psalmist was thinking of just such persons when he wrote, "Blessed is he that considereth the

Dorcas

poor: the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble" (Ps. 41: 1).

They sent unto him [Peter] two men. The disciples of Joppa were grief-stricken and bewildered when Dorcas, a pillar of the church, died. She was so important they felt they could not do without her. They sent two men to Peter who was at Lydda and urged him to come to them immediately. Doubtless they wondered, if Peter could not restore her, who among them would visit the sick, poor, hungry and discouraged; who would sew and cook and do all the other things that Dorcas counted a privilege?

Then Peter arose and went. Peter realized the perplexity and the grief of the disciples at Joppa, for he immediately returned with the two men, thus recognizing the importance of women's work in the church. How they must have been strengthened on that return trip! They knew the anxious hearts awaiting them, and the sight of Peter striding along with them surely gave them comfort.

All the widows stood weeping. Throughout the Scriptures we are taught that widows are to be honored, protected and cared for. The early church was careful to accept and discharge this responsibility. In the church at Joppa, Dorcas must have been one whose duty it was to minister to them. The widows knew that one whose hands had served them cheerfully, whose heart was touched by their need was gone, and their great grief found an outlet in tears.

Women and the Church

Showing the coats and garments. It was not a small thing to make a coat and a garment in those days. And each piece of clothing which the widows showed Peter represented hours and hours of work. The coat was the inner vesture, usually with sleeves, and reached to the knees. The garments were the outer robes. These constituted the entire wardrobes. As the widows showed Peter the material evidence of the industry, the thoughtfulness, the ministry and love of this disciple, the words from Proverbs might have occurred to him! "Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates."

Presented her alive. What joy must have reigned in the church at Joppa when Peter called the saints and the widows, and presented Dorcas alive! They must have felt that God recognized her great value to them and their great need for her in giving her back to them. Once more her nimble fingers would fashion the needed garments; once more her loving Christian care would cheer them. And now they would resolve to be more thoughtful of her. Yes, it was a day of great rejoicing.

Many believed. This miracle performed by Peter must have been the chief topic of conversation in Joppa for many days, since it involved Dorcas, known and loved by so many. Once again the attention of those who had not believed was arrested that they might consider him who has the power to give life. Dorcas' life had preached a powerful sermon, for many believed. "Let your light so shine

Dorcas

before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5: 16).

Many saw the light that Dorcas held up before them.

And two thousand years after, the influence of Dorcas is still felt, for Christ-loving women all over the world, grouped as ladies' aid societies, Dorcas societies, guilds, etc., have taken up the needle that fell from the hand of Dorcas, and it has proved to be a mighty instrument for the church.

CHARACTER STUDY

Reading and studying the story of Dorcas creates a desire to meditate upon the traits of character that made this disciple at Joppa so necessary to those in the church there.

1. *She was a disciple.*

The first sentence in the account gives this beautiful name to her—a disciple. She was a follower who followed very near the Christ. Her true Christian deeds make this very clear. She was a Christian student with a mind open to new truths. She was a learner who learned at the feet of the great Teacher.

2. *She was diligent and industrious.*

Had Dorcas been an idle, indolent woman she would have been the woman described by Paul in his letter to Timothy! "They learn to be idle, wan-

Women and the Church

dering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also, and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not" (1 Tim. 5: 13). The coats which required hours of labor speak eloquently of her diligence and industry.

3. She dedicated her talents to the Lord.

She used the talent God gave her to "relieve the afflicted." She knew the meaning of religion. "Pure religion and undefiled before the Father is this, To visit the fatherless, and the widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world" (Jas. 1: 27). The talents of Dorcas were dedicated to the Lord. In serving her fellow men she served her God.

4. She was sympathetic.

About her were widows who were in need, and to see a need was, with Dorcas, to do something about it. She did the work that was at hand to be done. She did it cheerfully and lovingly; had she done it in a patronizing manner there would have been few tears when she died. One can be sure she was a familiar figure on the streets of Joppa, radiating the love of Christ as she went on her errands of mercy and love.

5. She was dependable—could be "counted on."

Dorcas accepted the responsibility of helping the widows, and she faithfully discharged it. She did not delegate a friend or coworker to the task. It

Dorcas

was her work of love, and she did it. She bore, indeed, another's burdens. "Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Gal. 6: 2).

6. She was influential.

The influence of this wholesome Christian woman must have been great. Through her work she contacted many persons, and it is not likely that she was silent about her Saviour and the way of salvation.

Her deeds of mercy strengthened everything she had to say about the Master whom she loved and served so well. These beautiful words found in Hebrews are distinctly applicable to this Christian woman:

"For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and your labor of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister" (Heb. 6: 10).

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

FACTUAL QUESTIONS

1. By what appellation was Dorcas (or Tabitha) known?
2. What is the meaning of the word "disciple"?
3. Do we know anything about the family of Dorcas?
4. Where was Peter at this time?
5. Why did they send two men to Peter?
6. How soon did Peter go to Joppa?
7. Why did the women weep?
8. Why did they show Peter the clothing?
9. Did the news of this miracle spread throughout Joppa?
10. Why did many believe?

Women and the Church

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How can we be known as disciples of Jesus?
2. Is there a place for almsdeeds today? Mention several ways of serving the unfortunate.
3. What happens to our talents if they are unused?
4. What happens when we dedicate them to the Lord and use them at every opportunity?
5. Is there any place in the Lord's work for service given with grumblings and murmurings?
6. How can a ladies' aid society, like Dorcas, render a real service of love for Christ?
7. Are we disciples who are learners? How do we follow?
8. Are we content to be passive disciples?
9. What is the difference between passive and active disciples?
10. Should we be most careful in directing our activities?

I do not ask that I may do
Great things, O Lord, for Thee,
But grant that in the little things
I'll ever faithful be.

As Dorcas did the needed work
In such a Christlike way,
Oh, may I see and heed the need
Of those I meet each day!

CHAPTER IV

PRISCILLA

ACTS 18: 1-3, 24-26.—After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth;

And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:) and came unto them.

And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers.

And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus.

This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John.

And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.

1 COR. 16: 19.—The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.

EXPLANATION AND COMMENT

The old story of Aquila and Priscilla will always be interesting to Christian women, for no matter how often we read it we shall always find a new thought upon which to meditate. How we wish that more had been written about this tactful woman! She is mentioned six times in the New Testament, and while the accounts are short, yet we

Women and the Church

can obtain a very good picture of a faithful Christian wife and a tireless follower of the Master.

The first verse of the Scripture records the fact that after Paul's great disappointment in Athens he came to Corinth, a city noted for its statues, pictures and vases of metal and earthenware. It was a city of pleasure and of unbridled license.

And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus. The name "Aquila" means eagle. This name in some form or other seems to be a favorite with the Jewish people. The birthplace of Aquila was a small town on the shores of the Black Sea. But remote as it was, it had representatives present on the day of Pentecost.

Lately come from Italy (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome). This line might have been written yesterday instead of two thousand years ago. While we read in our daily papers about the latest Jewish persecutions we realize that these people have suffered throughout the ages.

With his wife Priscilla. Because the name Priscilla or Prisca is a Roman name meaning ancient or aristocratic, scholars think she must have been a Roman woman of very old family, who had married the Jewish Aquila. When the persecutions drove the Jews from Rome, Priscilla elected to follow her husband; we find them first in Corinth, then Ephesus, Rome and back at Ephesus.

And came unto them. Here Paul found the couple who were to mean so much to him. They

Priscilla

could tell Paul much about Rome, whither his thoughts so often turned. It is likely they had accepted Christ before meeting Paul, and they, too, would profit by this close association. It was a very fine thing for all concerned.

And because he was of the same craft. Every Jewish lad had to learn some trade. Paul, although a well-to-do Hebrew, educated as a rabbi, had learned the tent-making craft. And the text here indicates that Aquila had not only learned that trade, but had taught it to Priscilla. So she was a tent-maker as well as a home maker.

He abode with them and wrought, for by their occupation they were tentmakers. The word "abode" carries with it the idea of remaining or living a long time in that particular place. So this arrangement was not for a week or two. The three Christians worked at their trade to make their expenses, but we may be sure they were busy sowing the gospel seeds in this licentious city, as the verses which follow record.

And a certain Jew named Apollos . . . came to Ephesus. Apollos was an eloquent evangelist who had come to Ephesus in his preaching journeys. It is not unlikely that he had furthered his gift of speaking at the great university at Alexandria, which was known far and wide for its courses in the arts, philosophy and religion.

This man was instructed in the way of the Lord . . . knowing only the baptism of John. There can be no doubt but that Apollos the Jew was a sincere,

Women and the Church

earnest, eloquent speaker, well versed in Scripture. It is likely he had heard John the Baptist preach, and had been baptized by him and so, as Scripture states, knew only the baptism of John. He was preaching the truth, as he knew it, with all the fervor of his sincere, earnest nature.

And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. Apollos proclaimed the truth he knew fervently and boldly. It no doubt was a departure from the usual synagogue talks, and it was delivered in the evangelist's fearless, sincere manner.

Whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard . . . expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly. As Aquila and Priscilla, who had come from Corinth to Ephesus, listened to this gifted speaker they realized that he did not know the plan of salvation; that he knew only the baptism of John. Realizing, too, that if this eloquent speaker knew more about the way, he could do a mighty work for Jesus, they decided to explain this way to him. How the hearts of this humble couple must have wavered with the thought that they might offend this brilliant man! But Scripture records they "expounded the way of God more perfectly" and Apollos went out and, guided by the teaching of Aquila and Priscilla, became one of the great evangelists of the New Testament.

Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord with the church that is in their house. Paul, writing to the church at Corinth, sends the greetings of Aquila and Priscilla, together with the "church that

Priscilla

is in their house." This couple were never so busy with their tent-making that they neglected the work of the Lord. The church was in their house! Not many can claim such today, but in one sense every Christian woman can have a church in her house. The training of children in the way of the Lord, the family worship period, the conversations of the day—all can bring into the home the sense that Jesus Christ is an invited guest.

What a wonderful example women of today have in this tactful, loving character, Priscilla!

CHARACTER STUDY

What Christian woman can read the story of Aquila and Priscilla guiding the great evangelist Apollos in a more perfect way, without wishing to meditate upon this beautiful character, Priscilla?

1. **She was a Christian.**

Where or how Priscilla, a Roman, accepted Jesus Christ as her Saviour, we are not told. The second time she is mentioned in Scripture we learn she was not only a Christian, but one who was "ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1 Pet 3: 15). She could not only give a reason, but she was able to help instruct a preacher who did not know the plan of salvation. Priscilla was a Christian who was not afraid to inconvenience herself, in that she had a church in her house. An active Christian? Yes, indeed.

Women and the Church

2. She was faithful and loyal.

When the persecutions of the Jews drove her husband from Rome, she, a Roman, went with him, and when we find Aquila at Corinth, at Ephesus, at Rome, back again at Ephesus, faithful Priscilla is by his side. We can almost hear her using the words of Ruth: "For whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God" (Ruth 1: 16).

She was loyal to her knowledge of the truth in that she detected the unsoundness of the teaching of Apollos and instead of remaining silent helped to give him the true doctrine.

She was loyal to the commandment of the Lord. Wherever she went she carried the gospel to others, having the church in her home. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Rev. 2: 10).

3. She was industrious.

There is no place in the Master's vineyard for a lazy Christian. Paul is proud of the fact that he earned his way and was not an expense to the church at Corinth, but he advised them not to use that as a precedent, for "the laborer is worthy of the hire." Aquila and Priscilla were tent-makers. Priscilla was a busy woman. Her house had to have her attention; she helped Aquila with the tents and yet she found time to be such a Christian laborer that Paul never forgot her. She is never mentioned without

Priscilla

her husband, but the very fact that she is mentioned, and in three places of the entire six her name is given first, clearly indicates that she was the leader of the two. "She openeth her mouth with wisdom: and in her tongue is the law of kindness" (Prov. 31: 26).

4. She was tireless and cheerful.

The more we meditate upon this unusual character the more indefatigable she seems. She and Aquila were not residents of one place but several, but no matter where her home, she was always serving the Lord. She must have found great joy in her service. She must have heard Paul say, "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap if we faint not" (Gal. 6: 9). Priscilla's labor was a labor of love for her Christ. She could say with Paul, "Wherefore we labor that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him" (2 Cor. 5: 9).

5. She was tactful.

It was no easy task to tell the eloquent speaker, Apollos, that his teaching was unsound. It took a fine sort of courage and a great deal of tact to do it in such a way that Apollos would go on to greater things. Yet because of her loving heart, Priscilla was able to do just that. The world today needs Priscillas, women who know the way so well that they can detect unsound doctrine and can in turn teach the way of life in all its beauty and simplicity. A woman said, "Our Priscillas have a huge task be-

Women and the Church

fore them if they attempt to correct all the errors of doctrine being taught today." She is right; we need women who have studied the Bible. Every woman can do so if she will give the time to it. "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2: 15). With true knowledge of the way of life and hearts full of love, women of today can do much to correct false doctrine.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

FACTUAL QUESTIONS

1. Who was Priscilla? What does the name mean?
2. Who was Aquila? What does his name mean?
3. Why were they in Corinth?
4. What was their occupation?
5. Who was Apollos?
6. What makes one think he was an able speaker?
7. What was lacking in his preaching?
8. How did he take correction?
9. Do we hear from him again?
10. How many times is Priscilla mentioned in Scripture?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What makes one think that Priscilla was a willing worker?
2. Why do we conclude that she was a student of the Scriptures?
3. Which did Priscilla put first—home-making, tent-making, or church-making?
4. Are Christian women today confronted with the same kinds of problems as Priscilla?
5. Can we give any real excuse for our lack of Scriptural knowledge?

Priscilla

6. What quality in Priscilla's character made her such an outstanding personality?
7. Do you think we are justified in calling her a Bible teacher?
8. Did Priscilla ever experience inconvenience to serve her Lord?
9. Are there false doctrines in the world today?
10. How can we detect them?

Priscilla helped her husband
Fashion many a needed tent.
She made her home a Christian home
Where'er the couple went.

Oh, Father, as I go about
My tasks from day to day,
Washing, sweeping, dusting too,
May I take time to pray.

CHAPTER V

MARY

ACTS 12: 12-17.—And when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying.

And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a damsel came to hearken, named Rhoda.

And when she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for gladness, but ran in, and told how Peter stood before the gate.

And they said unto her, Thou art mad. But she constantly affirmed that it was even so. Then said they, It is his angel.

But Peter continued knocking: and when they had opened the door, and saw him, they were astonished.

But he, beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord had brought him out of prison. And he said, Go shew these things unto James, and to the brethren. And he departed, and went into another place.

EXPLANATION AND COMMENT

Each time one reads the twelfth verse of the twelfth chapter of Acts there comes a great wish that more had been said about Mary, the mother of John Mark. But because she must have been a well known woman in the early church, there will be inspiration in even a short study of her.

And when he had considered the thing. Herod had cast Peter into prison and had made certain that he was well guarded. But he had not reckoned that "prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him"; with the result that an angel

Mary

delivered Peter from prison. After the angel left him Peter took the time to realize that it was not a vision, but a real truth—he was a free man on the streets of Jerusalem.

And he came to the house of Mary, the mother of John, whose surname is Mark. Peter was a friend of Mary and her son, John Mark. There was no doubt in his mind about the welcome he would receive when he reached their home. What a wonderful thing it is to have friends! In times of joy and in times of sorrow, the true friend is always ready to share. And what a wonderful thing to know "There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother" (Prov. 18: 24)! This Friend was a friend to Peter, Mary and John Mark. Peter, knowing that Herod would search for him as soon as his absence from prison was noticed, sought shelter of one who he knew would help him. "A friend loveth at all times" (Prov. 17: 17).

Where many were gathered together praying. Because the entire church in Jerusalem was praying for Peter's release, it is likely this was only one of the prayer meetings being held. But the fact that many were gathered together indicates that Mary had a large, commodious house. Some think it was in an upper room in her house that Jesus observed the Last Supper. But the significant fact of this line of Scripture is that they were gathered together praying. As we think of these early disciples we have a feeling that it was a real prayer meeting. There was no discussion of weather, friends, or even

Women and the Church

Scripture. They had come together to pray and they prayed. Jesus had said, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18: 20).

And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a damsel came to hearken, named Rhoda. We can almost see Peter knocking on Mary's door. How anxious he must have been to have the door open that he might tell the thrilling story of his release to the friends who were so concerned about him!

And when she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for gladness, but ran in and told how Peter stood before the gate. What consternation Rhoda left in the heart of Peter, and what amazement her news created in the hearts of the praying group! While they spoke the Lord answered. Truly this group believed the promise, "And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" (Matt. 21: 22). Rhoda's very joy hindered her in carrying out her duty and Peter was left standing at the gate.

And they said unto her, Thou art mad. Aren't we like this group gathered at Mary's? We pray and when God in His goodness answers our prayers we can not believe the evidence. They must have prayed, believing God would hear and answer their prayers, and yet when Rhoda told them that Peter was knocking they instantly concluded that Rhoda was beside herself, and when she insisted Peter was without they thought it was his angel. The Jews believed that every person had a guardian angel.

Mary

But Peter continued knocking. Knowing Peter, we wonder if the knocking did not grow louder and louder until they were compelled to stop the noise by opening the gate. Peter was not to be discouraged; he knew Herod's men would be seeking him and that he must have shelter. What a difference between the man who in fear had denied his Lord and the one who now stood courageously knocking at Mary's door!

They were astonished. Here they had been praying for Peter's release and they were astonished that their prayers had been answered so soon. It should have been no surprise to that group of Christians nor should it be a surprise to us today when the Lord answers our prayers. Paul tells us that we should "pray without ceasing." If every one who professes the name of Christ were a praying Christian, conditions in this world would be greatly changed. The last verse of the text tells us that Peter told them about his miraculous release and desired them to tell all the Christian brethren and especially James, the brother of our Lord. And then, not wishing to subject Mary to any inconvenience, he went to another place, and we learn he went to the city of Cæsarea after the soldiers failed to find him.

How we wish that more had been written about this gracious woman, Mary, the mother of John Mark! For the mother of the man who wrote the Gospel of Mark, must have been a woman who would inspire Christian women of today.

Women and the Church

The account just studied causes one to search for more information.

It is quite likely that Peter converted Mark, for we find in 1 Peter, the thirteenth verse, he calls him "Marcus, my son." The same relationship seems to have existed between these two as that between Paul and Timothy. From this line we know that Mark was with Peter when he wrote the first epistle.

We are indebted to Mark for the Gospel of Mark, which gives us the gospel story as Peter knew it. Early Christian writers declare that Mark wrote his Gospel as Peter directed. A few things related in this Gospel alone lead many scholars to think that as a youth John Mark had witnessed the crucifixion, had seen the risen Christ, and was present at some of the events of Jesus' ministry. It might have been so; no one knows.

But we do know that Mary was the one woman of the six Christian women whose lives we are studying who must have been a witness to all that transpired in Jerusalem that last week. And we know, too, that she must have been a fine Christian mother to have had such a splendid son in the service of the Lord.

CHARACTER STUDY

The meager account which we have of Mary, the mother of John Mark, makes Christian women anxious to meditate upon the character of this little-known woman of the Bible, who must have been so well known in the church at Jerusalem.

Mary

1. She was a praying Christian woman.

There was a need for a prayer meeting in those days, just as there is today; and praying Christian men and women met together to take their petitions to God, remembering that Jesus had said, "Whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you" (John 15:16). So Mary was a praying Christian who desired to gather about her those who were interested in the things of eternal value. It has been said by some one that every great man (or woman) had behind him a praying Christian mother. Surely John Mark must have had such a mother. We remember that John Mark, a young boy, left the Christian work with Paul and returned to Jerusalem, giving rise to the speculation that he was homesick; and Paul would not take him on the next trip. But because we know that he did re-enter the service and did great things for the Master, thereby winning Paul's commendation (he called Mark his fellow laborer), we feel that behind him was a praying mother. We think there must have been wise Christian correction there. "Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul" (Prov. 29:17).

2. She was wealthy.

Mary was an aunt to Barnabas, and knowing that Barnabas had sold land and put the money in the common treasury we think Mary belonged to a wealthy family. This supposition is strengthened

Women and the Church

by the fact that her home was large enough to be used as a meeting place for the prayer group, which must have been large since there were many Christians in Jerusalem even though many had been scattered by the persecutions. Her wealth did not attract her to a worldly life. She used it for the upbuilding of the kingdom, just as many good Christian woman do today.

3. She was friendly.

Because Peter went to her home without hesitation, one feels that he knew a friendly welcome was waiting there; and, knowing Peter, we feel sure that his friendship was not based on the fact that Mary was a wealthy woman. Rather they were friends because of their love for the Master and His work; their interest in leading the lovable young Mark into the service, and the persecutions which were common to all Christians. "A man that hath friends must show himself friendly" (Prov. 18: 24). Truly Mary must have been friendly.

4. She was hospitable.

Again let us remember that the early church was admonished to be hospitable. Paul in writing to Titus enjoins him to be a "lover of hospitality," and Peter says, "Use hospitality one to another without grudging." In this day and age, we are in such haste and hurry that we are fast losing the beautiful art of hospitality. And we are the losers. "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers, for thereby some

Mary

have entertained angels unaware." Mary, gracious woman that she was, opened the door of her beautiful, spacious home and every one, rich or poor, was made to feel that he had a special welcome to this prayer meeting. It will always be said of Mary, the mother of John Mark, that her home was ever opened to those who loved the Lord. Can that be said of us? "A gracious woman retaineth honor" (Prov. 11: 16). Mary must have been a most gracious woman.

5. She was interested in others.

What a fine thing it is to be interested in others! Every Christian woman should be interested in others. Only through our interest in others can we build up the church and win souls for the Christ, which is our business as Christian workers. "Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled" (Luke 14: 23). Mary was interested enough in her friend Peter to have a prayer meeting at her house to pray for his release. She was interested enough in others to encourage her son John Mark to be a missionary. "Others" should be the watchword of all earnest, Christ-loving women.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

FACTUAL QUESTIONS

1. Who was this Mary we have studied?
2. Where did she live?
3. Who was the Rhoda mentioned in the text?

Women and the Church

4. Why were the Christians at Mary's home this particular night?
5. Why was Peter in prison?
6. How was he released?
7. What did Peter tell the disciples in Mary's home?
8. Where did Peter go?
9. What effect did Peter's escape have upon Herod?
10. Why should we conclude that Mary was a woman of wealth?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Is there a place for more hospitality in Christian lives today?
2. Who is the loser if hospitality is withheld—the one who might have extended it or the one who might have received it?
3. Is the art of hospitality a gift or is it acquired?
4. Are we afraid that what we have to offer is not good enough?
5. If so, how can we overcome this feeling?
6. How do Mary and Lydia compare in the art of hospitality?
7. Do friendliness and hospitality go hand in hand?
8. Is there enough hospitality in our churches today?
9. Are strangers really made to feel welcome?
10. What methods might be used in our churches to insure a welcome to all visitors?

Kind Mary opened wide her door,
And smiled the folk to greet,
For all who came were honored guests;
The welcome was complete.

Lord, grant that I may offer, too,
The friendly open door
To those who need a welcome most—
The downcast and the poor.

CHAPTER VI

EUNICE

ACTS 16: 1, 2.—Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek:

Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium.

2 TIM. 1: 1-5.—Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus,

To Timothy, my dearly beloved son: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day;

Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy;

When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.

2 TIM. 3: 15. And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

EXPLANATION AND COMMENT

Many a Christian mother has named her baby daughter Lois or Eunice. These names are almost synonymous with "Mothers of the Faith"; and because of that we turn to study a little more closely those passages of Scripture relating to them.

Then came he [Paul] to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there named Timo-

Women and the Church

theus. Before the name of Eunice is ever mentioned in Scripture, the student learns that her son was a disciple of the Lord Jesus. Instantly one thinks how happy the mother of this young disciple must have been to know that his feet were set at an early age on the path of service for the Master. She had instilled in him, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth" (Eccl. 12: 1).

The son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess and believed. In these words we learn that his mother was a Jewish woman and a believer in the gospel of Jesus. There would be many more Timothys today if there were more mothers who believed, and believed to such an extent that they assumed the greater share of the responsibility for the welfare of their children's souls and did not leave it to a Bible-school teacher.

But his father was a Greek. The little word "but" leads one to conclude that the father was not a believer in the gospel. He was of that nation that worshiped many gods and was very likely an idolater. Here was one of those mixed marriages which Paul counsels against: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness?" (2 Cor. 6: 14). Human nature has changed very little in the last two thousand years, and the advice that Paul gives to those establishing homes is excellent advice for each generation.

Eunice

Which was well reported of by the brethren at Lystra and Iconium. Paul, desiring to take young Timothy with him on a missionary trip, takes the trouble to record that he (Timothy) was well thought of by the brethren among whom he lived. One may be very sure that a boy or girl who is much respected by the neighbors has a mother who is also a most respected woman. "Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, or whether it be right" (Prov. 20: 11).

Paul, an apostle . . . which is in Christ Jesus. This first verse of Paul's second letter to Timothy is the usual Pauline salutation. Paul is nearing the end of his imprisonment and longs to see Timothy. He expresses his desire four times in this short letter.

To Timothy, my dearly beloved son. In Paul's first letter to Timothy he calls him "my own son in the faith." Evidently Timothy was born into the kingdom through Paul's teaching. Certainly he was nurtured by Paul on the missionary trips and up to this very time. Paul's last letter to him is full of Christian advice to be used after Paul has gone to be with his Lord.

I thank God . . . remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day. What an inspiration it must have been to Eunice's son to know that the apostle Paul remembered him in his prayers! And, if Eunice knew it, it must have made tinkling bells of joy and peace ring in her heart to realize that her son meant so much to that great apostle. What a wonderful bond between friends is the bond of prayer!

Women and the Church

Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy. The meaning of this passage might be a little clearer if it were arranged thus: "When I think of the tears you shed when we parted, I long to see you that I might be filled with joy." Eunice had reared a son who was appreciative of the help that had been given by Paul. His appreciation and love were mingled as one. We are in great danger of losing the beautiful art of appreciation.

When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois. Paul sitting in prison has thought much about his beloved son in the faith, and now he recalls to himself and Timothy that he has had a precious heritage handed down to him. His grandmother, Lois, must have been a disciple of the Lord Jesus and as such had a great influence in the rearing of the child Timothy. Many young mothers say that grandmothers spoil the grandchildren; here is a fine example for Christian grandmothers to study.

And thy mother Eunice. The fine faith of the grandmother, Lois, was duplicated in the daughter, Eunice. They may have become Christians at the same time. And while the father was a Greek, these two women had instilled in the child Timothy the beautiful truths of Jesus. "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Prov. 22: 6).

And I am persuaded that in thee also. Paul had known Timothy quite a long time. He knew his

Eunice

work, for in writing to the Philippians he expressed the desire that Timothy would be with them soon. He would do the things that Paul would, since they were likeminded and he cared more for the things of Jesus Christ than for his own. Yes, Paul knew the faith of Lois and Eunice was in Timothy to an overflowing measure. "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 3:15).

What finer tribute could be given to any mother! What a reward for the hours she spent teaching the Word of God to her son! Truly Timothy could say with the psalmist David, "O God, thou hast taught me from my youth."

Paul calls Timothy's attention to the fact that these great spiritual values which he has known all his life should be preserved most carefully. He knew the character of those (Eunice and Lois) who took the time and had the patience to teach him to respect these values. They had hid the Word in his heart, that he might not sin against his Creator. What mother could do more? Millions have done less.

CHARACTER STUDY

"But continue thou [Timothy] in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them" (2 Tim. 3:14). These strong words of commendation on the part of Paul create in Christian women a desire

Women and the Church

to study the character of Eunice which was influenced so much by her mother, Lois.

1. She was a believer.

The text states that she was a Jewish woman and a believer. And after studying the Scripture about her and her son, Timothy, we feel that she was no half-hearted believer. She was one of those women who believed the gospel in its entirety and who must have practiced what she preached. She had an excellent example before her in her mother, Lois, and she in turn became an excellent example to her son, or Paul could never have used the words, "knowing of whom thou hast learned them." Well did Paul know the nobility of this woman of faith, Eunice! "Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all" (Prov. 31: 29).

2. She accepted responsibility.

When a child is born, the mother adds a great responsibility to her life. Here is an immortal soul given into her care. If she accepts the responsibility she will leave no stone unturned to guide that soul into the paths of righteousness. If she does not accept this responsibility, she will be content to let another assume it. Eunice, like many others, had given her son a father who was not a Christian, so the responsibility was not to be shared. But she did not shirk; she reared a boy who was well thought of by the neighbors in Lystra and the folk in the city of Iconium. He had had such excellent training

Eunice

that the great apostle Paul desired to take him with him, to make a companion of him. Much has been said about the friendship of David and Jonathan, but no friendship could have been more beautiful than this of Paul and Timothy. And it was Eunice who prepared her boy so that he could uphold his part of such a wonderful partnership.

3. She was patient.

There is no occupation that requires more patience than that of teaching. It makes no difference if there be one or ten pupils, a teacher must have patience. It was no easy work for Eunice to teach the Scriptures to Timothy. She began while he was a mere child, for some translations read, "From a babe." She knew that if Timothy were to become the good Christian man she wanted him to be, she must train him as a child; and to that end she taught him from the time he was a mere child. But patience always has its reward; and what a wonderful reward was given Eunice!

4. She was a woman of discrimination.

Because Eunice took the time to train her son, Timothy, we can but conclude that she was a woman who knew true values. The riches and fame of this world did not appeal to her. She knew the old proverb, "How much better is it to get wisdom than gold! yea to get understanding is rather to be chosen than silver" (Prov. 16: 16). She taught Timothy the value of true friendship, of responsibility, of

Women and the Church

appreciation, of loyalty and all the other qualities that made him so indispensable to Paul who wrote, "As a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel" (Phil. 2: 22). Eunice, seeing these values in her own Christian mother, was able to give them to her son. The loving service which Timothy rendered Paul and the church at Ephesus had its beginning in his childhood home under the sympathetic eyes of a godly mother.

6. She was a dutiful daughter.

Much has been said of Eunice as a mother, but she could never have been the splendid mother that she was, had she not first been a dutiful daughter. We can easily think that Lois had much cause to rejoice in her daughter. "She that bare thee shall rejoice" (Prov. 23: 25). And as she looked from Eunice to Timothy we wonder if the words of the proverb did not come to her: "I have taught thee in the way of wisdom; I have led thee in right paths" (Prov. 4: 11). And after all these years, we can say that no matter what the husbands and fathers may do, if the wives and mothers live such noble lives as Eunice and Lois, they will have their rewards in such children as Timothy. Such is the wonderful influence of a mother!

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

FACTUAL QUESTIONS

1. Who was Timothy's mother?
2. Who was his grandmother?

Eunice

3. Where was Timothy probably born?
4. What was his mother's race? Her religion?
5. What is known of Timothy's father?
6. Why did Paul wish for Timothy to go with him?
7. Paul sent his last letter to Timothy. True or false?
8. How does Paul commend Lois and Eunice?
9. What did Eunice teach Timothy?
10. How does Paul address Timothy?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What lesson can Christian mothers take from the study of Eunice and Lois?
2. Can mothers of today instruct their children as Eunice did?
3. Are we prone to let the Bible-school teacher alone instruct our children in God's Word?
4. Do you believe the proverb, "Train up a child," etc.?
5. Do you also believe the one, "He that spareth his rod hateth his child, but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes"?
6. How do you think Lois was able to help Eunice in the rearing of Timothy?
7. Do we expect too much of the Bible school?
8. How can we be sure that our children are receiving a Christian training in the Bible school?
9. What is the difference between Christian training and religious training?
10. How can we combat the evil influences that are about our children today?

Good Eunice said so many times,
"My son, commit thy ways
Unto the precious Saviour, and
Be happy all your days,"

Reward crowned all her teaching,
For Timothy, her son,
Rejoiced in loving service
For Christ the Holy One.

CHAPTER VII

PHCEBE

ROM. 16: 1-5a.—I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea:

That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also.

Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus:

Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.

Likewise greet the church that is in their house.

EXPLANATION AND COMMENT

In searching the Scriptures for those women who could be an inspiration to the women of the church today, it would be impossible to omit the name of Phœbe, that servant of the church, who, through her service, earned such a splendid commendation from Paul.

I commend unto you Phebe, our sister. Paul must have recognized, appreciated and valued the good work that Phœbe did in the church to have given her such a strong recommendation to the church at Rome. Somehow there has always seemed to be something especially touching and appealing about these seven words. If Phœbe read them or heard them read, they must have made little joybells tinkle in her heart. What beautiful words they are!

Phœbe

The dictionary says the word "commend" means, "To recommend as worthy of notice, to approve, to intrust," and truly Paul must have used this word realizing all it connoted. He knew her, her faith and her works, and he knew she was worthy to be noticed by the church at Rome.

Which is a servant of the church, which is at Cenchrea. The Greek word which is here translated as "servant" is *diakonos*. The masculine form of the Greek word is translated "deacon" in the eighth verse of the third chapter of First Timothy. It has long been the wonder of church women everywhere why this word pertaining to Phœbe should not be given its true translation, "deaconess." A deacon is, of course, a servant, but if the word is translated "servant" in one place, honesty would dictate that it be translated "servant" in every place it occurs unless the context should forbid.

Phœbe was a deaconess in the church which was at Cenchrea, and her work there as a deaconess was such as to call forth high praise from Paul. What was her work as a deaconess? One would naturally conclude it was the same as that of a deacon. In the church of God "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3: 28). The work of an authoress is the same as that of an author; the work of a directress, is the same as that of a director; so the duties and qualifications of a deaconess would likely be the same as those of a deacon. We may be sure that Phœbe filled her

Women and the Church

office in the same efficient manner as Stephen or Philip.

Since the word *diakonos* has been translated "servant," it is fortunate that Paul expressly tells us that it was her labors in the church at Cenchrea which made her worthy of notice.

In the city of Cincinnati, Ohio, is a splendid hospital called "The Deaconess Hospital"—a fitting name for an institution supported by a church, since it reaches out a helping hand to all.

That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints. The church at Rome is asked especially to welcome Phœbe, to show her the hospitality that should be given one who has put on the name of Christ and has labored in His vineyard. Paul has stressed the fact that there is a way to receive her which is expected from saints of the church. After thinking over these words one can be very sure that the saints at Rome welcomed Phœbe as a true disciple of Christ Jesus and showed her every Christian courtesy it was possible to show.

And that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you. No one knows why Phœbe left Cenchrea and went to Rome. She carried Paul's letter from Corinth to Rome, although the text does not specifically say that was her reason for making the journey. There must have been some business arrangement that needed her attention. The apostle in his letter not only insures her a welcome from the saints, but he especially asks them—and one almost reads "as a personal favor"—to help her in any

Phœbe

material way she may need. How secure Phœbe must have felt as she journeyed to Rome, for each time she touched the letter she was privileged to carry, she knew a welcome awaited her in the great city.

For she hath been a succourer of many. Here is one reason that Paul asks the saints to help her, for she has been one in Cenchrea who has succored many. The word "succor" is not used today as much as it should be. It is a word rich in meaning and its synonyms do not express the real meaning of the word. It means "to help or relieve when in difficulty or distress." Phœbe aided or comforted those in distress; that was one of her duties as deaconess, and we may be sure a duty which she supported with her whole heart.

"For I was an hungred and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison and ye came unto me" (Matt. 25: 35).

And of myself also. Paul did not learn of Phœbe's good works in a second-hand manner. He knew from personal experience that she was a deaconess in word and deed. Therefore he felt that he could ask the church at Rome to give her every consideration.

Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my helpers in Jesus Christ. We add this verse to our lesson Scripture because we have studied that great character Priscilla. They have now moved to Rome and are still in the service of the Lord.

Women and the Church

Who have for my life laid down their own necks. Unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. No one knows just what Paul is referring to here, but the meaning is clear that Priscilla and Aquila have at some time saved his life, and because of that he and all the Gentile churches owe them thanks. It is quite possible the church at Rome did not know this, and Paul writes it that they may appreciate Priscilla and Aquila a little more.

Likewise greet the church that is in their house. And in this city of Rome we find loyal Priscilla again has opened her house that the saints might be steadfast "in the apostles' doctrine, and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2: 42).

What a meeting it must have been, when that gentle deaconess Phœbe was welcomed into the home of faithful, loyal Priscilla! Perhaps they had never seen each other before, but as their hands clasped and their eyes met each knew she had met a true laborer in the Master's work.

CHARACTER STUDY

Phœbe, the only deaconess mentioned in Scripture and praised so highly by Paul, must have been one of the outstanding personalities of the early church. No Christian woman is able to give her merely a passing glance. We must learn all we can about her character and service.

Phæbe

1. She was a deaconess.

Many thoughts are implied in those first words. The first thing denoted is that she was a Christian and one who was respected and honored by the entire church; had she not been an honored, respected servant of Christ she would not have had the office of deaconess.

2. She was loyal.

And not only was she respected and honored, but she was loyal—loyal to her friends, her church, her Christ. Because she had been loyal and faithful to her small duties, she had been given a greater work—that of deaconess.

3. She was sympathetic.

Her office as deaconess required that she assist the widows and those in need, and teach the children (early Christian writers say these were the duties of a deaconess). She did just that, for Paul says she succored many, as he, a recipient of her aid and comfort, could testify. There is a need today for sympathetic workers in the kingdom. Workers who can go into homes that are full of sorrow, full of discouragement, full of distress and take the light and love of Jesus Christ. One can almost see Phæbe as she goes about her duties as a deaconess of the church, her face shining as her eager feet carry her into needy homes. One can almost hear the song of her heart.

Women and the Church

My heart sings out in love
For what Thou art to me;
Thou art my life, my strength, my all.
I give myself to Thee.

"She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy" (Prov. 31: 20).

4. She had a kindly tongue.

As Phœbe went about her duties as deaconess she must have thought many times of the apostolic injunction, "not double-tongued" (1 Tim. 3: 8). She had great need to know the right word and when to say it. She needed the sympathetic and sometimes strong word; other times the loving, understanding word. Surely she must have said with the psalmist, "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer" (Ps. 19: 14). How we all should remember that words are living things; they have the power to heal or wound broken hearts! More homes are broken by thoughtless, harsh, cruel, untrue words than by any other thing. When will Christian mothers impress upon their sons and daughters that silence is golden, that "he that refraineth his lips is wise"? (Prov. 10: 19). It is one of the most important lessons that any boy or girl can learn. More homes would be really Christian if the mother used this old proverb: "She openeth her

Phœbe

mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness" (Prov. 31: 26).

5. She was industrious.

No one can hold the office of deaconess and fulfill its duties as they should be fulfilled and be an indolent person. The office requires a real worker; an energetic, industrious woman. Phœbe must have discharged her duties in this manner: "Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks" (Prov. 27: 23), and surely Phœbe was one who fed the lambs of the kingdom.

6. She was trustworthy.

The Roman letter is one of the chief group of the Pauline Epistles (the others are First and Second Corinthians and Galatians), and many think it the "most profound work" of all Paul's letters. Phœbe was counted trustworthy to carry this letter to Rome and deliver it to the brethren there. How desirable it is to be counted trustworthy in our work in the kingdom! Many are anxious to start a good work, but are not so anxious to complete it. For such comes the admonition, "Let us not be weary in well-doing: for in due season we shall reap if we faint not" (Gal. 6: 9).

"I commend unto you, Phœbe, a deaconess of the church." These words of praise stand after two thousand years a most fitting memorial to Phœbe and an inspiration to Christ-loving women the world over.

Women and the Church

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

FACTUAL QUESTIONS

1. Who was Phœbe?
2. Where did she labor?
3. Why was she going to Rome?
4. What important message did she carry?
5. Why should the translation read, "Phœbe, a deaconess," rather than "Phœbe, a servant"?
6. Whom did Phœbe likely meet in Rome?
7. Why did Paul recommend Phœbe to the brethren?
8. What more do we learn in this lesson about Priscilla?
9. What books make up the chief group of the Pauline Epistles?
10. How did Phœbe serve her Lord?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Compare the work of Priscilla with the work of Phœbe.
2. Was the work of Phœbe a distinct bit of work to be done in the church?
3. Why is there little opportunity for a woman to become a leader in the church today?
4. Is much thought given to the work of deaconess?
5. Is much stress laid upon this important office, or is it passed over lightly or completely ignored in the local church?
6. May any Christian woman, anxious to serve her Lord, appropriate such a position to herself if she is not given the office?
7. Because we have one instance in the early church of the office of deaconess are we warranted in believing all the churches had such offices?
8. What reasons can be advanced for having the office of deaconess properly filled in every church?
9. Who does most of the real work in most churches?
10. Would you say that a church has any good reason to leave the office of deaconess vacant?

Phæbe

As Phœbe gave a helping hand
To those who needed aid,
We think she read the Scriptures,
And very often prayed
For strength to do the Christian work
That needed to be done,
For wisdom to lead others to
Her Christ, the Father's Son.

CHAPTER VIII

WOMEN AS CALLERS

One of the important phases of women's work in the church is that of calling. Some may say that it is the duty of the teacher or the deaconess to call, but many women who have no special duties may find in calling a service which they are fitted to give.

The great commercial firms who send their sales forces out to call in the homes have the art of calling thoroughly studied, and some of us are inclined to think thoroughly mastered. Before their representatives are allowed to make a call they instill in them the idea that their firm is the best of its kind, their manager the most capable in the land, and their product far superior to the finest already on the market. They must know the right approach and the right answer to any question that might arise concerning the product. When the novice is thoroughly prepared, he is sent out with an experienced man—confident in the firm, the manager, the product and his own ability to sell it.

We can take a lesson from these commercial firms. They have much to teach us in the art of selling. The sales principles are the same, whether we are selling books, real estate, or the church. We

Women as Callers

know that the firm we represent is the greatest firm ever known or ever will be known—the kingdom of God. The product we sell is the most satisfying, and it has eternal value, for it is Jesus, the Christ. And because we know these things, we should study and pray that we shall be able to make the right approach; present the Christ and His church in just the right way to make a successful call.

Why should we call?

Jesus said, "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations" (Matt. 28: 19). And while we sympathize with and aid the missionaries on the foreign field, yet we find that in our own community are persons who have no regard for the Christ or His church. The desire to reach the unreached about us should cause us to wish to be members of that great sales force that is selling the winsome Jesus to thousands of unsaved in our own nation.

Upon whom should we call?

One man who belongs to a group called "Pavement Pounders" says we should call on every person in the community. What if they are members of another church? We can at least show them that we are vitally interested in the Lord's work.

But here are a few calls that should always be made:

1. *Calls upon prospective members.* Through other classes in the Bible school we can secure the names of those in the age group we wish to interest

Women and the Church

in our work, hoping that instead of bringing one of that family into the Bible school we shall be able to bring the entire family. And securing them for the Bible-school class is the first step toward adding them to the kingdom. Each new member in the Bible school can give the names of others who are not attending the church. In this way and in others a prospect list is made. Each group in the church, Bible school, ladies' aid, missionary society, Christian Endeavor, etc., is rich with prospective names. But it takes a little time to secure them. Do you wish to give this time to the Lord?

2. *Calls upon the visitor.* When a visitor appears at any of the functions of the church, the name and address should be secured and a prompt call made. The caller will not have to awaken the interest there, for the visitor has already evinced his desire for the fellowship offered by the church. A woman once went to a certain small church three Sundays. No one noticed her but the minister. Do you wonder that she said, "I'll go one more Sunday, and if no one sees me, I'll hunt up another church"?

Then we have those who are known, but who are occasional attendants. These persons need calls and calls until their interest is crystallized. Different ones should call on such persons.

3. *Calls upon the new families.* There are families moving in and out of every neighborhood. These newcomers should be visited immediately and given a cordial invitation to the church services. The facts about the spiritual status of the family

Women as Callers

should be *tactfully secured*. This information may then be given to the minister and the Bible-school superintendent. A minister of a large church has an arrangement with the transfer companies whereby he knows whenever a new family moves into the city. He immediately calls, and those on the Calling Committee follow his example. Is it any wonder that he has a church doing great things for the Master?

4. *Calls made upon the sick.* We are sometimes negligent of those who are ill. We should watch this closely. The calls in such a home or hospital should be very short and cheerful. Quite often we can supplement these calls with cheery cards and little gifts. The poorest member of the flock should be remembered as well as the more prosperous one.

5. *Calls upon the bereaved and discouraged.* All about us are those who are in grief, in need, in perplexity, in anxiety and in many other states of mind. Of course, the presence of a good Christian woman is needed in such homes. At the time of death there are many who call, but the long days that follow need to be brightened with cordial Christian fellowship.

And those homes that are discouraged and troubled—many a Christian woman perceives the aching hearts where such conditions exist and knows that balm must be carried there. And along with the balm must go a generous supply of tact. This is one of the instances where the right hand should not know what the left hand is doing.

Women and the Church

Then we have the aged and the shut-ins; are we a bit negligent of them sometimes? We think the Home Department of the Bible school will look after them and they do, but what a ray of cheer and love is given when the unexpected visitor, letter or card arrives. Truly this is an important call.

6. *Calls upon the new mother and baby.* Here is a call that the caller delights to make. It brings joy to all concerned. However, one should again caution against a long call; it is so much better to make all calls short and cheerful. The welcome caller is the one who knows when to leave.

7. *Calls upon the new members.* Too often we feel that when the prospect has become a member of the Lord's body the work is done. But in many cases it is just begun. There should be friendly calls made regularly upon the new member. There oftentimes are questions to be answered and there is always Christian fellowship to be maintained. If there were more calls made on the new members we should not have so many indifferent members on our church and class rolls.

8. *Calls on those who have grown indifferent.* Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could say, "No one ever becomes indifferent in the church to which I belong?" But we are sure there are very few who can say that. When such apathy arises, no matter what the cause, it is well to make the call quickly, and as though nothing had happened; but should the subject of indifference be mentioned, discuss it thoroughly and turn to another topic of conversa-

Women as Callers

tion. Should it be mentioned again, ask the person's permission to pray with him about it. One woman usually ends such a call by asking the indifferent person to do some special piece of work for the class, society or the church. The psychology is sound.

9. *The evangelistic call.* This is a call which is usually made after other calls. Those making this call should have all the knowledge they can secure concerning the family. Armed with this information and confidence in the Christ whom they represent, they make the most important call—a call which, if rightly made, will lead that one to Jesus, the Christ. This call is obeying the last commandment of our Lord. This is usually a teaching call.

Some will say, "We know the calls that need to be made, but there are other aspects that are not so generally known, such as, when should we call? And how can we make our calling more effective?"

When should we call?

Some calling committees set aside a certain day in the week for calling. This day is that which has been found in the past to be a most convenient day in the community to call and to receive calls. If the women are calling on the women, or on the children, they naturally will call at a time when they can be expected to be at home. If, however, the callers find they have come in at a most inconvenient time for the household, they should leave immediately, promising to call again soon. Always leave as graciously as you enter.

Women and the Church

How should we call?

Jesus sent His disciples out, two by two, and it is better that Christian workers follow that plan today, always carrying the Word of God. Those calling should be teamed to the very best advantage. It might be well to place a capable teacher with one who makes a good approach, etc.

No matter how the callers are teamed, they should make it clear in some way or other that they have a purpose in calling and that purpose is Jesus the Christ and His church. If there is an interest evinced, the callers might spend an hour in teaching and discussing, but that is long enough. If the interest is lacking, make the call short, and plan to call again.

How should we approach people?

This is the question that is uppermost in the minds of those who are going to call. One woman said, "I don't mind calling after I get started, but I falter over the starting." She liked to call after she had made her approach. If we called with the intention of inviting a stranger to our home for a special occasion, we should present ourselves in as pleasing a way as we possibly could. So it is when we call for the purpose of inviting her to a special church day, a special class function, etc.; we make our first moments of contact as pleasing as we know how and we are usually answered in just such a way.

Women as Callers

How should we close our call?

There is an old saying that a good speaker knows when to stop; and a good caller knows when to leave. It is as important to know when to leave as when to call, and it is also as important to leave graciously as it is to enter graciously. By all means make the call too short rather than too long. There can always be a second call if the first should be too short.

The friendly, gracious, sensible woman who gives her time to call can always be counted upon to find a logical means of approach, and she will always keep her specific errand uppermost in her mind; no matter how many turns the conversation may take, she or her cocaller will be able to bring up the important subject in a most pleasing manner.

Too many times and in too many of our church organizations, the calling is done in a most haphazard fashion, and consequently the desired results are not always obtained. It is much better to take one or two evenings and work out a definite plan before beginning a special calling campaign or a year's work.

There is one bit of Scripture that those women who call may mark as being peculiarly meant for them: "I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me" (Matt. 25: 35, 36). Beautiful, isn't it?

Women and the Church

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Why should the callers go in pairs?
2. Are all women suited for calling?
3. Why should all callers carry a Bible?
4. On whom should we call?
5. Do all calls require the same approach?
6. How should the calling group be chosen?
7. Why is the "leaving" as important as the approach?
8. How shall callers know when to end the call?
9. What is the purpose of making calls?
10. How can a group be trained for calling?
11. How often should one person be visited?
12. What value is there in organizing and systematizing the work of the callers?
13. Should "callers" be designated as such in the various church organizations?
14. Who should direct the calling group?
15. Why should one of the callers be a Bible student?
16. Can a caller be detrimental to the work of the church?
17. Why is this particular piece of work so very necessary?
18. Why should the callers have all the information about the prospects they can secure?
19. How can a timid woman learn to help with this work?
20. Should a caller be a good listener?

Oh, Father, as I go about
My duties day by day,
Teach me just the thoughts to have
And just the words to say.

May I perceive another's joy,
And then another's woe,
And where I am most needed, Lord,
Give me the strength to go.

CHAPTER IX

WOMEN AS TEACHERS

Priscilla did an outstanding piece of work when, with Aquila, her husband, she corrected the imperfect doctrine of a brilliant preacher; and today women are doing an outstanding piece of work as teachers in our church schools on Sunday morning, during the week and in the vacation Bible schools.

The women of the church carry the greater part of the teaching work, and it is a responsibility, an honor and a privilege. There is no higher calling than that of a teacher of the religious truths found in the Old Book. It is a calling that is full of great responsibilities, rare opportunities, many possibilities and sweet privileges. It stands right alongside the calling of the preacher and it affords even better opportunities to win men, women, boys and girls to the Master; for there is a peculiar bond between teacher and pupil that can not be found in any other relationship.

The dictionary tells us that "teaching is the art of instructing or educating those who are not familiar with the subject matter." Using that definition of teaching, those who are teachers of adult classes might think their work is not necessary or

Women and the Church

so valuable, because in most adult classes many of the members have spent years in the Bible classes and already know so many of the lessons. To such teachers these words from a minister and teacher of many years' experience will have an especial meaning: "Always teach the Word of God as though it had never been heard before, for here is a sad thing which I have learned in the years of my ministry—the Bible, to most church members, is a closed Book."

Not long ago a leading Bible-school magazine sent the following question to hundreds of ministers, superintendents and leaders: "What in your opinion is the greatest need in our Bible school today?" A ready response came from the North, the South, the East and the West; and nine out of every ten thought that the greatest need was a better trained, more consecrated, loyal corps of teachers.

Yes, the women assuming the greater share of the responsibilities of teaching in the church schools need to strengthen their ranks with women who are willing to give their time and their effort to this great work for the Master. Perhaps if the work of the teacher were appreciated a little more by leaders of the church, it might not be so hard to fill the teaching staff with capable teachers.

The education boards of our public schools require those desiring to teach to have certain qualifications. It is just as necessary that those who teach in the church schools have qualifications that fit them to give the very best service. What are these qualifications?

Women as Teachers

Consecrated Christian.

Every teacher in the Bible school should be a consecrated Christian who believes the Bible is the inspired Word of God. Many persons read their Bibles through the Bible-school teacher. How very necessary then that she live a life that is wholly compatible with her teaching! She handles the sacred truth. "Be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord" (Isa. 52: 11).

Lesson preparation.

It is said that any teacher can become a good, skillful teacher if she is willing to pay the price in giving time to the preparation of the lesson; and it does take time and effort. But could any one spend time and effort in a better way? What a joy it is to be able to present a lesson in a clear, understandable way!

Some teachers make a practice of reading the next lesson on a Sunday afternoon. Then with the aid of Bible study helps (quarterlies, magazines, etc.) they spend at least a half hour each day in study. This is a good habit, for at the end of the week that teacher will be so full of the subject matter that she will be able to present it as a vital thing.

Punctual attendance.

There are teachers who regard their work as teachers so lightly that they do not remember to secure a teacher for the class, or to inform the super-

Women and the Church

intendent beforehand when they expect to be absent. This should never be. It is a terrible thing for a class to meet and no one there to teach it or to have a substitute rush in when the period is about half over and announce that although she is unprepared she will teach the class. Every person who consents to teach a class should feel that she has taken a responsibility that can not be carried lightly. As the teacher, it is her business to be with her class every Sunday morning, and be there before (at least 10 minutes) the opening exercises of the Bible school. This gives her an opportunity to greet the members as they come in, and to meet the visitors. There might be times when it would be impossible for a teacher to secure a substitute teacher or to inform the superintendent when she is unable to meet her class, but they are few and far between. A good substitute teacher for each class would be the solution of this problem.

Church Loyalty.

Why do we teach God's Word? To lead those who have never confessed the name of Christ to accept Him as their Saviour, and to help those who have put on His name to a fuller understanding. Realizing this, every teacher knows that her responsibility does not end when the lesson period closes, for she should attend the morning service of the church. In fact she should attend all the services, and give her moral and financial support to all the endeavors of the church. She should teach by

Women as Teachers

her sincere example—"I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord" (Ps. 122: 1).

Self-development—education.

Some one has said that a poor teacher who is growing is preferable to the better teacher who is self-satisfied. No matter how good the Bible school teacher may be, she can not afford to be self-satisfied. She should be constantly growing in grace and wisdom, and this growth is attained only through Bible study, meditation and prayer. The richer the inner life of the teacher the more the class will benefit. She should grow in knowledge. Every publishing house carries a list of books designed to assist teachers in their desire to grow in knowledge. In her general reading she should be a Priscilla, able to detect unsound doctrine, of which there is a vast amount these days.

Visiting or calling.

This is one of the important phases of teaching. A successful teacher of a women's class in one of our church schools keeps her own record of the attendance of the class. Using her telephone she checks up on the absentees the first part of the week; then she writes cards, letters, and makes the calls she can during the rest of the week. She is always in close touch with every member of her class, even those who live ten miles from the church. Is it any wonder that her class has a steady growth?

Women and the Church

Evangelism.

The earnest, sincere teacher knows every member of her class who has not made the good confession. Here is her opportunity for home teaching. This is a much more personal and intimate type of teaching. Those who are shy will not ask questions in the class, but in their homes will ask many questions. Then it is that every teacher must be ready to give an answer for the hope that is within her. Here is an opportunity, many times, of leading entire families into the kingdom.

In a Christian workers' institute a group was asked to name some defects of the Bible-school teacher, and the first defect named was:

Lack of preparation.

Since many voices named it at the same time it would seem that some Bible-school teachers are guilty of standing before their classes on Sunday morning without adequately preparing the lesson. The teacher may even say she has not had the time to prepare the lesson properly (which the class will know before she finishes).

Neglect of spiritual life.

No matter how well the lesson is prepared, if the teacher has neglected her spiritual life (and we are all guilty) it will show through. Perhaps teachers do not understand how quickly the classes sense this defect.

Women as Teachers

Tardy teachers.

From the expression voiced by this group of Christian workers, it would seem that very little leniency could be extended to that teacher who has a habit of being tardy and oftentimes absent without securing another teacher for the class.

Two common failures.

Teachers often fail to teach Christ as Saviour and to stress importance of church worship. There is no excuse for either. Every lesson lends itself to the revelation of the Christ as our Saviour, and surely that teaching can easily be followed with emphasis upon the importance that we worship Him in the church services, "Enter into his gates with thanksgiving and into his courts with praise" (Ps. 100: 4).

Lack of sympathetic understanding.

Yes, it is possible to be a teacher of God's Word and not feel the problems of the members of the class. Perhaps this defect could be overcome through knowing the pupil, his environment and his life. In the adult classes there might be a better understanding on the part of the teacher if she knew the problems which beset the members.

Methods of presentation.

The wide-awake teacher, after preparing her lesson thoroughly, will sometimes ponder over the

Women and the Church

method of presentation. No one can say that this or that method is best. The women who teach children will use methods suitable for that age, while those who teach the older groups find they have a choice of several methods.

Discussion method.

In using this method the teacher needs to be constantly on the alert to keep the discussion on the subject matter. Too often irrelevant topics are introduced and the Bible-school lesson receives scant attention.

Question and answer.

Some like to use this method, feeling that it fixes certain Bible facts and truths in the minds of the pupils. It does. The questions should be well chosen and the teacher should be prepared to restate the pupil's answer in a clear, concise form.

Chart or blackboard.

This method is often used and it is very good; for the mind seems to retain better that which has been seen as well as heard. There can be no doubt about it—we are eye-minded. If you have a blackboard, use it often.

Lecture method.

This is the method used by most adult teachers. If the teacher knows her class as she should know it, she can use this method most effectively. There

Women as Teachers

should be a short period for questions upon the lesson. More information can be given the class with this method.

The thoughtful teacher will soon discover which method is best for her particular class and will use that method, occasionally using others. But whatever method is used in teaching and whatever helps are used in preparation, the Bible, and the Bible only, should be held in the teacher's hand during a class period. It detracts from the effectiveness of a lesson for a teacher to hold the quarterly, the commentary or any other aid. If she needs an outline, it can be placed in her Bible.

The teaching of children

In discussing the qualifications and defects of a teacher we find that these principles are applicable to every teacher in the Bible school, from the Beginners Department up to the adult group.

Of course, the methods must vary. These faithful women who are teaching in the Primary, Junior, Intermediate and Senior classes should be ever alert for new methods to hold the boys and the girls.

These women are indeed serving their Master in a most acceptable way. They are laying the very foundation for a Christian life, and often without the aid of the parents. Their work may many times be underrated and overlooked, but we may be sure that the master Teacher does not overlook one of these faithful women who gives herself willingly in His service.

Women and the Church

A beautiful word.

The word "teacher" is a beautiful word. It rates with such words as heaven, home, mother and those other words which mean so much to the human family.

Jesus was addressed in the four Gospels more times as Teacher or Master than by any other title. He is referred to as teaching more than five times to one as preaching. We are indeed called to a great and glorious work. And she who teaches today, out of the fullness of a consecrated heart, finds her inspiration and strength in sitting often at the feet of the great Teacher.

Priscilla must have prepared her "heart to seek the law of the Lord and to do it and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments" (Ezra 7: 10). This could well be the motto of every woman who is a teacher of God's precious truths.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Should a teacher ever say to a class, "I'm sorry, but I just didn't have time to prepare the lesson"?
2. Do we not usually have time to do what we earnestly desire to do?
3. Do you think any teacher ever measures up to the seven qualifications discussed?
4. How should a Christian woman react if a teaching position is literally thrust upon her?
5. How can a teacher keep one or two from asking irrelevant questions and turning the entire period into the discussion of some trivial point in the lesson?

Women as Teachers

6. How much truth is in the saying that "As the teacher is, so is the class"?

7. Can most teachers overcome the defects mentioned in this chapter?

8. Is it a good thing for the class to present a guest teacher quite often?

9. Why should one be careful in asking a guest teacher to teach?

10. If the teacher is most regular in attendance, how often should the substitute teacher be asked to teach?

11. Do we expect our teachers to teach the lesson, or do we expect them to teach and lead the class in all its activities?

12. What is the purpose of all Bible teaching?

13. Why should we be most careful in our choice of teachers?

14. What should a teacher expect of her class?

15. Is the teacher an evangelist?

16. Should a teacher be content to be just an instructor?

Oh Master, as I read Thy word,
Help me to clearly see
What Thou wouldst have me do and say,
What Thou wouldst have me be.

Give me an understanding heart
That I may teach for Thee,
May open up Thy precious truths
For some poor soul to see.

CHAPTER X

THE WOMEN'S BIBLE CLASS

The church school that has a wide-awake, growing, co-operative, consecrated, Bible-studying class of women can count itself fortunate indeed, for through such a consecrated Bible class many souls may be won for the kingdom.

Organization.

It often is true that before a class can do its most effective work it should be organized. That is, it should have its teacher and its corps of officers—president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer. And of equal importance with the officers are the chairmen of the committees—calling, evangelistic, program, benevolent and social. The success of a Bible class, in most cases, depends in a large measure upon the efficient work of these committees.

Monthly business meeting.

Most classes find it beneficial to have a business meeting each month. This meeting may begin with a devotional period, followed by a "business-like" business session, and may close with a short entertainment and refreshments, or, as some call it, a social hour.

The Women's Bible Class

The devotional period is very important. Each month the president should appoint some one to have charge. An effective service may consist of a song, a Scripture, a short—very short—lesson on that Scripture, a few brief prayers, a good poem and a verse of song. The service should always have a theme such as "Love," "Faith," "Service," "Patriotism," etc., and the Scripture, songs and poems should be chosen with that in mind.

Many a devotional period has lost its effectiveness because the leader thought she should read a paper fifteen or twenty minutes in length; the entire devotional period at a regular class meeting should never exceed fifteen minutes.

The president then takes charge and asks for the roll call, the secretary's and treasurer's reports and the reports of the various committees. If these committees are functioning properly, the chairman or the cochairman will have a report to give the class. Then comes any old business that may have been left from the last meeting. When all of this has had attention, the president takes up the new business that is to come before the class. The president should avoid lengthy discussions of any subject by having the personnel of her class well in mind and being ever ready to appoint a committee to take up the matter and report at a later date. If the members are co-operative in the matter of giving their entire attention to the business in hand, quick to make and second the desired motions, the president will be able to conduct an excellent business meeting.

Women and the Church

The closing part of the regular class meeting is as important as the other two. It should be such as to be conducive to a fine fellowship.

Class Period.

On Sunday morning the time is to be given to the teacher to teach the Bible lesson, and is not to be used for the business of the class. The president takes charge, and, after welcoming visitors and those who have been absent makes the announcements and reports in as few minutes as possible. If an unavoidable question or subject should arise, the president quickly appoints a committee to take care of the matter and the class will abide by the decision of the committee.

The conscientious teacher spends hours in preparing her lesson; she knows she must connect it with the preceding lesson, must give the exposition, make the application and present the evangelistic appeal in a short time, and every minute is precious. She has been asked to teach the class, and has given of her time and energy to prepare, so it is only courteous that she be given every possible moment. The consecrated class will show its appreciation of its teacher by seeing to it that she has all the time it is possible to give her.

The teacher.

We have discussed the teacher in another chapter. But it might be well to reiterate some of the important points of that chapter.

The Women's Bible Class

The teacher, and this applies to the substitute teacher also, should be a consecrated, devoted Christian woman of good personality and great loyalty to the services of the church. She should be a "growing teacher," seeking to grow in grace and in wisdom. She should know each one of her class—her problems, her family, her friends—for every one likes the human touch. She should be punctual, and if it is impossible for her to be in her place Sunday morning, she should have some one there. The class is to be pitied that awaits the coming of the teacher, only to find at the last minute that somebody (anybody whom it can get) unprepared is to be the teacher. No class, the teacher of which does not accept her responsibility seriously enough to be in her place with her lesson prepared to the best of her ability, can hope to succeed.

Attendance.

The greater part of the work of the Calling Committee pertains to attendance. That is one reason this committee is so important. The attendance of the Bible class and, therefore, the Bible school and church is increased through the efficient personal work of this committee in the women's class. Many ministers in churches, large and small, do not hesitate to say that the success of their churches is due in no small measure to the effective calling done by a few consecrated women.

This committee often divides the class into groups, and has one person check a designated group

Women and the Church

each Sunday for absentees and prospects. This check is followed up during the week with personal calls, telephone calls, cards and letters.

Sometimes this committee designates one or two of its number to make the sick calls, others are asked to make the call on the prospects while others are to call on the new members. It is a wonderful thing to secure new members for the class, and the wide-awake class must have new members, but it is a greater thing to hold these new members securely until they have been made members of the body of Christ. This can be done if the members of the Calling Committee have a vision of real service for the Master, and are willing to follow that vision by contributing with generous portions of their time, effort and thoughts.

This subject of calling is treated more thoroughly in another chapter, and while it pertains to the general calling of the church it is applicable to any organization in the church. Sometimes the women's class can be responsible for the calling of the church. Then it should be done under the direction of the minister.

Evangelism.

The primary business of the Bible school and its classes is evangelism, therefore, the Evangelistic Committee is a most important one. With people on every side of us giving little thought to the Lord and His work, with America becoming more pagan every day, it is our business to go into "the highways and

The Women's Bible Class

the hedges and compel them to come in." Every member of the class should be an evangelist, but a committee consisting of the teacher and one or two consecrated, tactful, well-trained members, working with and under the direction of the minister, should accept the responsibility of this important work. It is needless to say those in this group should know the Scriptures, and be ever ready to give an answer for the hope that is within them. The work of this committee complements the work of the Calling Committee.

Program.

The growing Bible class should have a "long-time program"; that is, a plan or program should be adopted for six months or a year. Its framers probably will want to set a goal for membership, perhaps arrange a contest within the class or with another class, and then with the aid of the Calling Committee work to accomplish the objective. Oftentimes the Program Committee sends cards and uses the telephone to promote the contest. It prepares plans to increase the attendance on special days. In this it works with the Calling Committee. These two committees, working together, keep a prospect list and an inactive list, and these lists are constantly consulted, checked and changed. The Program Committee might well be called the Promotion Committee, since its work is to promote the attendance and welfare of the class through a carefully planned program.

Women and the Church

Benevolent.

Two or three sympathetic, understanding women, who do not believe in letting the left hand know what the right hand is doing, may constitute the Benevolent Committee; a special fund or treasury must be provided for the benevolent work. Some classes have a "tin-can Sunday" once each month, and this helps, while not taking the money from the treasury. Other classes have an "old clothing day" when the discarded clothing is brought in, assorted and given where it can best be used.

The women of the Loyal Women's Class of the Chase Avenue Church of Christ, Cincinnati, Ohio, made a "joy comfort" last Christmas. It was given that name for the women had the joy of giving, and a fatherless family of five children in the heart of the city had the comfort the gift carried. They each fashioned a block of washable material the size of a newspaper page after the manner of a "crazy-quilt" block. When these were collected there was enough for each side of the comfort. One woman gave an old quilt which served as batting, another gave the thread to tie it, and one bit of benevolent work was done without costing a penny. There are usually quite a few things around each home that could be worked over by the Benevolent Committee. Few classes today have none in their membership who are needy. Ministering to these needy ones is profitable work, for through such ministry many are led to Christ.

The Women's Bible Class

Social.

The Social Committee sees that some one welcomes the members as they come in on Sunday morning, and makes the stranger acquainted with several women. Its members have charge of the social hour following the class meetings, arrange for social functions as mothers' and daughters' or mothers' and sons' banquets, picnics, house warmings and showers. Every class should have three or four social times each year.

Installation.

Some classes like to have a short installation service when the newly elected officers are ready to begin their terms. This makes a nice service and should be used by all means. Plenty of time should be given this service, for if it is done in haste it would be almost as well not to have it. The retiring president, after finishing the old business in the routine of the business meeting, announces that it is now time to turn the meeting over to the installing officer, who might be a past president, a former teacher, a deaconess, elder, or minister. The retiring officers then leave their places and the installing officer asks the officers-elect to take their places. At some center point a table is placed, and on it are the same number of candles as officers to be installed. As each officer is installed some designated member of the class lights a candle; when all are installed the lights are turned off and the installation proceeds by candlelight.

Women and the Church

INSTALLATION SERVICE

INSTALLING OFFICER—We stand tonight at the close of the old year and the beginning of the new year. As we glance back we are not only aware of our mistakes and shortcomings, but we are also aware of our victories and our successes. We wish to express to you, our retiring officers, our heartfelt thanks for your leadership and welcome you back into the ranks with us. You retire from the office, but you do not retire from the work of the Lord. I say with the apostle Paul, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord" (1 Cor. 15: 58). (Turning to the officers-elect)—You have been elected to the various offices of this class because the members feel that you are qualified in every way to hold these offices and to lead this class. (Turns to the president.) Will you, my sister, promise to discharge the duties of this office in a kind, courteous Christian manner, always looking to Jesus, the Christ, for your strength, and for your wisdom?

PRESIDENT—I will, knowing, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4: 13).

INSTALLING OFFICER—(Motions the president to her chair, then turns to the vice-president.) Will you, my sister, promise to do all in your power to help the president in the leadership of this class, looking to Christ, the Author and Finisher of our faith?

VICE-PRESIDENT—I will. "I will put my trust in him" (Heb. 2: 13).

INSTALLING OFFICER—(Motions the vice-president to take her chair, then turns to the secretary.) Will you, my sister, promise to perform faithfully the duties of your office, knowing they are essential to the welfare of this Bible class? And "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to thee"? (Jas. 4: 8).

SECRETARY—I will. All that I do shall "be done in love."

The Women's Bible Class

INSTALLING OFFICER—(Motions the secretary to her place then turns to the treasurer.) Will you, my sister, promise to discharge the duties of this office to the best of your ability, praying God, the Father, to be faithful in all things?

TREASURER—I will. "I will call on the Lord, who is worthy to be praised" (2 Sam. 22: 4).

INSTALLING OFFICER—(Motions the treasurer to her chair, then turns to the teacher.) Do you, my sister, promise to study the Word of God and teach it in all its beauty, simplicity and truth? Do you promise to perform faithfully the other duties that this position entails?

TEACHER—I do, knowing "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Ps. 119: 105). (Closing her eyes in prayer) "Quicken thou me according to thy word . . . teach me thy statutes" (Ps. 119: 25, 26).

INSTALLING OFFICER—"Who then is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the Lord?" (1 Chron. 29: 5).

ALL THE OFFICERS (with hands upraised)—"I am thy servant: give me understanding" (Ps. 119: 125).

INSTALLING OFFICER—O Thou who didst come to serve and to minister, we thank Thee for the great example Thou didst set as a laborer in the Father's kingdom. We do most earnestly desire to be colaborers with Thee. We rejoice in Thy promises. And we do put our faith in Thee. Give us a vision, and strength and power to execute it. May we rejoice this coming year in a perfect fellowship, and may we be the means of bringing souls to Thee. This we pray in the Master's name. Amen.

While the candles are burning, a soloist sings, "Take My Life and Let It Be." At the close of the song, the installing officer and those installed repeat, "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditations of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer" (Ps. 19: 14).

The new president then proceeds with the meeting.

Women and the Church

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Why should a women's Bible class be organized?
2. Discuss the importance of the committees.
3. How much of the lesson period should a president use?
4. Why should the monthly business meeting be well attended?
5. What is your idea of a devotional service?
6. How can a president keep a meeting from dragging?
7. Why should there be a social hour at this meeting?
8. Much has been said about the services of the teacher. How can a class help to make the lesson period interesting?
9. What should a teacher expect of a class?
10. What is the primary business of every class?
11. Why should the teacher head the Evangelistic Committee?
12. How can the president get a committee to perform its duties?
13. How can the Women's Bible Class help the minister? The church? The Bible school?
14. Do the leaders of the class have a right to expect that the members of the class will co-operate willingly and earnestly?

CHAPTER XI

THE LADIES' AID SOCIETY

All over Christendom today we find groups of women organized as "Ladies' Aid Societies," "The Women's Guild," etc., but whatever the name, the group has but one purpose—that of helping in the church one way or another. It is to be hoped that the plans given in the following pages will aid these women in the work which they are doing. First among the suggestions offered to the women is organization.

Organization.

In order to facilitate the work of the society it would be best to adopt a constitution and by-laws. The following suggestions may be modified to meet the needs of each local society.

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE 1—NAME

The name of this organization shall be "The Ladies' Aid Society _____."

ARTICLE 2—OBJECT

The object of this society shall be to promote the spiritual and material interests of this church.

Women and the Church

ARTICLE 3—MEMBERSHIP

All women who are interested in the object of this society, as stated above, willing to co-operate in all its plans and to serve to the best of their ability, are eligible to membership.

ARTICLE 4—OFFICERS

The officers of this society shall be a president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer, whose election shall take place annually, by ballot; the majority vote shall elect. The terms of these officers shall be one year, or until their successors are elected.

BY-LAWS

ARTICLE 1—MEETINGS

This society shall hold regular monthly meetings on the [designate which day of the week and month here]. Special meetings may be called by the president at the request of the society or the Executive Council.

ARTICLE 2—DUTIES OF OFFICERS

1. The president shall preside at all meetings, which shall begin promptly. She shall see that regular meetings of the Executive Council are held. She shall appoint such committees as the business of the society requires. She should remember that a harmonious, successful, spiritual meeting depends largely upon her.

2. The duty of the vice-president is to preside in the absence of the president and assist her in any way she can.

3. The secretary shall keep a roll of the membership of the society; keep an accurate record of all the proceedings; read the minutes of preceding meetings, all communications, papers and documents, as directed; notify members of their appointment to committees, and shall be a custodian of all books, records and supplies as may be intrusted to her care.

4. The duty of the treasurer is to receive all moneys, keep an itemized account of all receipts and expenditures, and to

The Ladies' Aid Society

report the same to the society. All expenditures shall be paid by her after the society has voted to pay them. The treasurer's books should be audited by an auditing committee, named by the president, at the close of each business year.

5. The executive committee shall be composed of officers of the society. It is the duty of this committee to recommend plans for the society and to call special meetings when necessary. This committee should remember that the success of the work depends in a large measure upon it.

6. Should a vacancy occur in the office of vice-president, secretary or treasurer, the society elects the officer at the next regular meeting.

ARTICLE 3—COMMITTEES

The Ladies' Aid Society shall have as many standing committees as are necessitated by the work to be done. These committees, named by the president after consulting the executive committee, should consist of those especially adapted to a particular bit of work. The best work of any organization is done in its committees, and that society is most fortunate that can depend upon each committee to function as it should.

Special committees may be appointed at any meeting. Such committees are discharged when the particular bit of work which called them into existence is finished.

ARTICLE 4—ANNUAL MEETING

The election of officers shall be held at the annual meeting, the _____ Thursday of the month of _____. At this time all officers and committees shall read a full report of the work which they have done while serving their term of office.

ARTICLE 5—QUORUM

[Give number] members shall constitute a quorum to transact business at any business meeting.

Women and the Church

ARTICLE 6—AMENDMENTS

The by-laws and the constitution may be amended in the manner prescribed by any recognized manual of Parliamentary Law.

Order of Business:

1. Call to order.
2. Devotional period.
3. Roll call.
4. Reading of minutes of the last meeting, and their approval.
5. Treasurer's report. Accept for auditing.
6. Reports of committees—standing and special.
7. Unfinished business.
8. New business.
9. Adjournment and benediction.

The Business Meeting:

The business meeting is divided into three parts: The opening or the devotional part; the business session, and the social hour.

1. The Devotional Period:

Quite often the president appoints a small committee to serve as a devotional committee for three months; others appoint a larger committee to serve for the entire year. But whether the committee serves a long or short time makes no difference; the devotional period, for which it is responsible, should be made a most important part of every meeting.

Every women's organization should have a spiritual background which would in a way erase the

The Ladies' Aid Society

idea that such organizations are for the sole purpose of making money. The devotional period of each business meeting is one way of emphasizing the spiritual interests.

The committee should notify the devotional leader a month in advance. This will give her time to select her theme and choose the songs, Scripture and poems which will fit in with that theme. For instance, if she should choose the theme "Jesus—Our Friend," followed by the song, "I Need Jesus," or "It's Just Like His Great Love," she might wish to read a little of the friendship of David and Jonathan, or she might turn to her concordance and find many beautiful verses bearing upon this theme, and combine them for the Scripture lesson. This Scripture is followed by a prayer or several short prayers; then, if time permits, another song, "I Have a Friend," and the period closes with the song or some good poem on friendship. Again the leader might wish to choose a woman of the Bible for the inspiration such a character might give. We think of the Shunammite woman, who was "a great woman." Many beautiful lessons and thoughts can be developed from the study of this "great woman," a title given to no other woman in the Bible. The general theme of "Service" or "Mercy" or "Help" would fit in well with this character study.

There is so much material at hand that all devotional periods can be varied, impressive, instructive and spiritual, but it takes time to make them so.

Women and the Church

We are prone to give the devotional period little thought, and that society which begins its meetings with almost any song, and Scripture and a rambling prayer is to be pitied.

2. The Business Meeting:

When the devotional period is ended, the president asks the secretary to call the roll. It is very interesting to have those present answer with a verse of Scripture, and if a general theme is used from month to month many new verses will be learned. The secretary then reads the minutes of the last meeting; if there are any corrections, they should be made then. The treasurer gives her report. This is accepted for audit. The standing and special committees are asked to give their reports. After all reports are read and accepted, the unfinished business is discussed. The new business is then taken up. After this, the president calls for a motion to adjourn. The society usually adopts one of the very fine benedictions found in the Bible.

Every organization should have a small, practical book on Parliamentary Law, and should be guided by the rules of order which it contains.

3. The Social Hour:

The third part of each meeting of the Ladies' Aid Society should be a social hour, conducive to fine fellowship. At this time the program committee provides a short entertainment. It may consist of solos, duets, readings, etc., or it may be varied with

The Ladies' Aid Society

games and contests. Just now the "right and wrong" contest is popular and many variations of this can be worked out with Scriptural questions. Most publishing houses carry a line of books for the social hour, and the wide-awake society will invest in one of these, for it can be used on many occasions. After the entertainment, light refreshments are served. There is a fellowship gained while one is sipping a cup of cocoa or tea that can not be found in any other way.

What is the work of this group?

The Ladies' Aid Society and the Minister:

There are many ways in which the society can help the minister, and chief among them is the assistance given him in calling. In conjunction with the calling, cases of illness, sorrow, discouragement, etc., may be reported to him. Some societies appoint a Calling Committee. This committee divides the community into districts, and two or three are responsible for assisting in each district. This committee should meet with the minister before or after each monthly business meeting of the society and discuss the reports given during the month past and plan the work of the coming weeks. Some societies have a "Prayer Circle"—a group of consecrated women who pledge themselves to pray during a certain hour, for the church, special evangelistic efforts, the minister, the organizations of the church, the homes, and for each other. "More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of."

Women and the Church

The Social Life of the Society:

Man is a social creature. He likes the social contacts with his fellow men. If he doesn't have the right associations, he is likely to make the wrong contacts, for he must have companionship. How much better it is for young and old of the church to enjoy the society of their own group, which is constantly enlarged by inviting new persons!

The society often appoints a committee which functions as an advisory group to the young people of the church. Naturally the young folk make and execute their plans, but this committee stands ready at all times to help them in any way.

Some societies plan three or four social functions for the year. They are given that the entire church may get together in a social way. These may be receptions for new minister, new members, Bible-school teachers, etc. They may be given in the spirit of fun, when the Halloween season is chosen for a general good time. At these functions, those on the Calling Committee invite those on their prospective lists. Then, of course, there is the picnic for the summer time. These events should be made as attractive as possible.

Some societies like to dress up their regular meetings with a Special Day. There are so many special days throughout the year that it is an easy matter to plan a special program for almost any month. All these things add interest.

The Ladies' Aid Society

Money-making Suggestions:

This chapter would not be complete without a few suggestions about making money. There are so many places for a quarter or a dollar that the treasury of the society needs to be replenished quite often. Some groups plan to combine the making of money with a social time. One particular group had an evening of fun when they gave a "Hat Auction."

Hat Auction:

Each person, for his admission, brought a hat carefully wrapped. When all were gathered, an auctioneer sold the hats within a price range which had previously been agreed upon. The buyer then wore the hat all evening. After a good program, light refreshments were served. One may be sure that every one had a most pleasant evening.

The Kitchen Orchestra Concert:

An orchestra which uses spoons, frying pans, brooms, washboards, tubs, etc., for instruments is assembled, while its members hum the words for the song. This entertainment may last a half hour, with jokes, rimes, etc., interspersed with the songs. Serving of light refreshments and an informal hour completes the program.

The Birthday Parties:

Each guest is asked to give as many pennies as the date of the month on which the birthday comes. A chairman is appointed for each month and the

Women and the Church

guests are assigned to the group in the month of their birth. Each group gives one stunt on the program.

The Dollar Social:

This social is planned a month or two in advance. It is given a great deal of publicity. The entertainment comes in hearing how each person made the dollar which he gives. These accounts should be interspersed with songs, etc.

The Foot Party:

Each guest has his shoe measured and gives three cents for every inch in the length of his shoe. A good program of sketches, songs, readings, etc., should be planned, followed by refreshments.

Suppers:

Each society has a "tested and tried" time for suppers. Some like a little variation such as a "Colonial Supper" where a host and hostess are in the costumes of George and Martha Washington; while old-time songs are played throughout the evening. Others like the "Men's Supper" where the men do all the work. The "Harvest Supper" in which the young men and women serving wear farmer clothes, and the decorations are autumn foliage, fruits and vegetables, gives something different. Then the "Valentine Supper" allows for pretty decorations of all kinds.

The Ladies' Aid Society

Other Means:

One society makes quite a profit selling greeting cards throughout the year. Others gather waste paper, tinfoil, coat hangers; give lawn fetes; make recipe books; sell cleaning articles, flavoring extract, etc. One group sold clean rags to the garages of their city. Another has two annual rummage sales and two bake sales.

The Happy Woman:

The busy woman is the happy woman. In all churches we find widows of limited means, women who have very little money to give to the work of the Lord, but these same women are happy when they can serve by cooking a tasty meal or preparing for a rummage sale. Such work in the society gives an outlet for talents of all kinds. Let no one mistake the great good accomplished by such organizations, for every time a person does something for the church that person immediately has an interest in the church. Many persons are won to Christ through interest created in the work of the church when they answered the call for some small service.

To the Glory of God:

Women should ever remember that it is not the work that hurts and tires, but the spirit in which that work is done. Yes, it is the spirit in which the work is done which determines whether it is a joy or a burden. But whatever we do, whether it is

Women and the Church

cooking, sewing, baking, washing dishes, visiting or teaching, let us do it lovingly and cheerfully and to the glory of Jesus who has done all for us.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Is the Ladies' Aid a necessary organization of the local church?
2. How may the local organization help the minister?
3. How can the spiritual side of the society be emphasized?
4. Discuss the enterprises or projects to raise money that should be avoided.
5. How could the devotional period be improved?
6. Discuss the points that make for a good business meeting.
7. Why do some meetings lag and fail to hold the interest of the society?
8. Why should there always be a social hour?
9. What is the psychology in giving a person a task to do for the church?
10. How should all work be done?

CHAPTER XII

THE MISSIONARY SOCIETY

"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28: 18-20).

Some one has said "these verses contain the marching orders of the church," and in this work women have found a splendid opportunity not only to serve the Master, but to study world conditions, initiative and leadership.

History.

It might be well to cast a backward glance at the missionary society, which today is recognized as a women's organization; this glance takes us back to Bible times when women were more or less secluded, treated as inferior to men and had no place in business or in community activities. Men in the local churches of a little later day had the same conception of woman's place in the church. Because

Women and the Church

men, contrary to the general import of the New Testament teaching, have assumed control of the churches, of which women constitute two-thirds of the membership, many important phases of Christian work were, and are, neglected, and through many centuries the woman's work has been minimized. But there is no way of minimizing Paul's statement that in Christ there is no male or female.

A little over a century ago, some men and women answered the "marching orders of the church" and found themselves in need of the financial aid of those at home. The men, busy with other things, gave the matter scant attention. Then it was that the women of the churches aroused themselves to give the financial support that was needed. It was not long before women, denied so long a way to serve as their abilities and talents warranted, had formed missionary groups in practically every church. And this movement, which has been largely a woman's movement, has had a steady, fruitful growth.

Its place.

No one today would think of minimizing the importance of the Missionary Society, and because there is just so much time to do so much work, some local churches have joined the Missionary Society and the Ladies' Aid. But because we are not entirely like-minded, and because there is a diversity of gifts and talents, there will always be those who will use their abilities better in one place than the other. The

The Missionary Society

time is approaching when the women's work will be united under "The Women's Department" or some such name, and all will rejoice in the saving of time and energy, and the increase in service, not by few, but by many. This prediction can be made because it is now being tried by several churches. There are many adjustments to be made in such an arrangement, but it can and will be done. Until that time comes, many women will want to work a little more efficiently in their local society; others will want to form new societies, some of them independent.

Organization.

In another chapter a suggested constitution has been given. In forming a missionary society, one would have to make some changes in that suggested constitution.

ARTICLE 1—NAME

This organization shall be called _____
_____ Missionary Society of the _____
Church.

ARTICLE 2—OBJECT

The object of this organization shall be to cultivate a missionary spirit in the church; to interest individuals in the missionary work; to encourage systematic missionary giving; to promote missionary education, and to organize and train the younger generation in missionary activities.

The other articles and the by-laws would not need any change.

Committees that function are the joy of a president of any organization. Sometimes in our zeal

Women and the Church

to give every member something to do, a committee becomes too large and does not function as it should. A faithful committee of one is better than a large committee which does no work. Upon the work of the committees the society rises or falls. With that in mind we mention some special things to do.

Standing committees.

1. *Program.* This committee plans the program for the regular meetings; for seasons of prayer for the missionaries on foreign fields and home fields. Much of the interest shown by the society depends upon the work of the program committee. Most societies will be able to get a year book from their publishing house or other established agency. Much thought has been put into these programs, and with them to guide, the committee using its ingenuity can give the society splendid programs.

Perhaps the committee does not care to follow the outlined program, but takes up the separate countries with the missionary personnel of each. This is interesting.

Each member of the committee should watch all articles she reads for paragraphs of interest. This world is changing so fast these days that even our daily papers give us items that affect our missionaries at home and abroad. The committee may wish to devote certain meetings to prayer, peace, or the study of the missionary message of the Bible. There are many lessons in the "marching orders of the church."

The Missionary Society

At each meeting the leader for the next month should be named, and the topic should be given. Many societies find pleasure in responding to the roll call with a verse of Scripture upon the topic to be studied.

Some like to vary the program by having a sketch portraying the work of some missionary whom the society loves. Others give "news flashes" from as many missionaries as possible.

Special programs are often suggested by members. The wide-awake committee will be ever on the lookout for new material, new ways of presenting old material and new talent. An old saying, "What we look for we will find," is quite true.

2. *Enlistment.* As the name indicates, the work of this committee is to enlist the membership of each woman in the church. This committee can secure a list of Bible-school members from the enrollment secretary or from the various classes, and a list of the church members who do not belong to the society. After studying the list, the committee can set a goal, "Every woman in Bible school and church a member of the Missionary Society," or it can work for a definite number, as "Twenty-five new members by October first." It can plan special days to bring a group into the society, special recognition for the group, etc.

The committee might plan an evening for men; some might care to be enlisted; a special Honor Roll for men might be made. The society will be benefited if it adds such an Honor Roll.

Women and the Church

3. *Literature.* This committee collects all the literature—books, magazines, letters, tracts, etc.—and makes it available to the society. It solicits subscriptions to the paper which carries the activities of the mission fields.

One society has a literature committee that collects the unused Sunday-school literature and sends it to a mountain district. One distributes missionary tracts among the membership of the local church. Others make themselves responsible for supplying the literature for Children's Homes, etc., and they keep a supply in libraries and waiting rooms, while others secure subscriptions for the missionary paper for the society and the church.

4. *Library.* The library and literature committees work together. The literature committee reports the material it collects each month and turns it over to the library committee, which in turn files it and lends it to the membership. The librarian selects what she wishes to keep in the library for the use of the society, and what should be taken to the shut-ins. She keeps an accurate account of all literature loaned to the members. She suggests the literature which she thinks will benefit the society most.

5. *Mission study.* This committee suggests and plans mission study classes for the benefit of the entire church. It encourages individuals to attend the mission schools that are given by various missionary societies. It plans a series of three- to five-minute talks to be given before the Bible school.

The Missionary Society

These talks should be interesting and instructive. The committee arranges for a missionary to visit and speak before the church. It also organizes the missionary circles for the Juniors, Intermediates and Seniors. It organizes a prayer league to pray at a certain hour for certain mission fields.

6. *Friendship.* This is an important committee. It promotes a friendly interest among the members in the society's work with shut-ins, and with those more or less indifferent. It secures the literature from the librarian and carries it to the shut-ins, along with a load of friendship and good will. It prepares, with the aid of the society, boxes and barrels of fruit, jellies, cookies, or clothing, quilts, etc., for Children's and Old People's Homes. The committee may secure the birthday date of several missionaries and remember them in a special way. As it works, other things to do will come to mind. Some will not cost a cent, while others will cost a few nickels. But the joy of the receiver will be entirely out of proportion to the time and energy given by the committee.

7. *Social.* This committee plans for social occasions, and for the social hour following the meeting. Besides providing a friendly spirit at the meetings, it can arrange for silver teas and other entertainments and functions that not only provide a social evening, but aid the treasury. In another chapter a number of such evenings have been described.

Sometimes the society wishes to give a play, and the social committee will be in charge of all arrangements. If it does not have in its personnel one

Women and the Church

capable of directing the play, it should secure a director and work with her. Catalogs from various entertainment houses will list many plays for women, while the Christian publishing houses and missionary headquarters can furnish those plays that deal with missionary problems.

8. *Publicity.* This committee will be kept busy by the wide-awake society, for it will not only see that the regular meeting is well announced, but that publicity is given to any special features of that meeting and to all special meetings. It will publicize all mission schools, mission study classes, visits and talks by missionaries, talks in the Bible school, and all social functions of the society. It can use the church bulletin board, the church paper, community paper, pulpit announcements, posters, placards, etc. It has a real work to do.

Work for the entire society.

The entire society will wish to undertake several projects during the year. Some of the standing committees will be able to help with these in the general routine of their duties, while others will require the appointment of special committees.

A Christmas Club for a favorite missionary is a fine project for an entire society. The dues may be given by individuals, taken from the regular treasury, or the proceeds of certain functions may be set aside for the Christmas Club.

The society might be interested enough in some worthy, promising young man or woman to arrange

The Missionary Society

to pay his or her tuition at some near-by seminary.

Members of the society might feel the need for an exchange of ideas, and if there is no District or City Woman's Missionary Society, they might organize one.

The society each year will plan just how many mission fields it can aid, and to what extent it can give. Or if it does not send directly to the missionaries, it will accept or reject the amount given it to raise. If it accepts, the members will immediately plan how to raise the money. It is wise to put each project given to secure funds in the hands of a different committee. The year's missionary program should be carefully planned, and every effort should be made to carry out those plans.

All are missionaries.

As we earnestly pray and sacrifice and work for the Negro of Africa, let us remember to have a Christlike attitude toward the Negroes of our country, and not only toward the black race, but toward every race, holding always the standard of Jesus for them to see. We all have opportunities to be missionaries in our own communities.

INSTALLATION SERVICE

SONG—"Jesus Shall Reign Where'er the Sun."

SCRIPTURE READING—Matt. 28: 16-20.

PRAYER.

SONG—"We've a Story to Tell to the Nations."

LEADER—Yes, we've a story to tell to the nations of the East, the West, the North, the South. What is that story?

Women and the Church

SOCIETY—"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3: 16).

LEADER—To whom was the Great Commission given?

SOCIETY—The Commission was given to all disciples.

SOLO—"I'll Go Where You Want Me to Go."

The leader then asks the officers-elect to take their places. After a minute she speaks.

LEADER—You have been chosen by the members of the Missionary Society of this church to lead and guide the affairs of this society that its influence may be felt, not only in the local church, but in the uttermost parts of the earth. You have been chosen, not only for your ability to discharge the duties of your particular office, but because you have an earnest desire to send the message of Jesus Christ to those who have never heard it. Do you, realizing the duties of your office, promise that you will be faithful to discharge them, and that you will be faithful to Him who said, "And, lo, I am with you always"?

Each one answers, "I do."

The leader turns to the society, "And you who have honored these officers, do you promise to be faithful to them, discharging, with love and cheerfulness, the duties which may be given you, remembering that the attainments of this society are in your hands?"

The society answers, "We do."

SONG—"Christ for the World We Sing."

LEADER—

"The Lord bless thee, and keep thee!

The Lord make his face to shine upon thee,

And be gracious unto thee.

The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee

And give thee peace" (Num. 6: 24-26).

Each committee in charge of the installation may enlarge on this as it wishes. Some will want

The Missionary Society

to have flowers or candles in the service, and these can be used in a most impressive manner. The service here given is only a suggestion.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What are the Marching Orders of the Church?
2. How was the Missionary Society called into existence?
3. What is its place today?
4. Discuss the probable future of the women's organizations in the church.
5. Why are committees so important?
6. Should one accept a place on a committee if she has no intentions of working?
7. How can a president, who by virtue of her office is a member of every committee, help a committee to function?
8. Why should great care be given to the selection of a committee?
9. Is the strength of a committee measured by the number of its personnel?
10. Discuss "A society is as strong as its weakest committee."
11. How can we train young women for committee work?

CHAPTER XIII

THE DEACONESS

In the early Christian church there was an office of deaconess as well as the office of deacon. There was a deaconess, Phœbe, as well as a deacon, Stephen. The work of the deaconess was done by faithful, Christ-loving women, who labored for the Master, not for praise or recognition, but for the "building-up of the body of Christ."

The office of deaconess has in the past been disregarded by some.

Today, however, many churches, interpreting the Scriptures as their content implies and without prejudice, have recognized the office, and once more that work, which is truly women's work, is done "in decency and in order."

The work of the deaconess is similar to that of the deacon. In the third chapter of First Timothy, Paul gives qualifications for the deacon, which may well apply to the deaconess.

Grave.

Certainly this would not mean that a deaconess wear a long face and look at everything in a gloomy way. Rather it means that she is to be serious-

The Deaconess

mind, far removed from frivolity, and well-balanced. One who knows the value of spiritual things.

Not double-tongued.

In other words she should be a woman whose word is never questioned—truthful. She should not be given to saying one thing to one person and quite the opposite thing to another. A modern synonym for "double-tongued" is "two-faced." It is not a pretty word, and the pity is that it can be applied sometimes to one who wears the name of Christ.

Not given to much wine.

In this day, when women, as well as men, drink cocktails, it is well to call attention to this qualification. Women aspiring to the office of deaconess should be temperate in these things, and temperance should mean total abstinence, for the office of deaconess is one that should call for great respect for the occupant. She should be worthy of this respect.

Not greedy of filthy lucre.

"The love of money is the root of all evil" (1 Tim. 6: 10), and that person who is "greedy of filthy lucre" might obtain it through dishonest methods. Such a person would put money ahead of all other things. The kingdom of heaven, represented by the church on earth, can not use hearts that are greedy for material things; such persons would dishonor the church in any community.

Women and the Church

Holding the mystery of the faith, etc.

We are surrounded by mystery. The faith we hold dear is a mystery. The prophets prophesied the Messiah; His birth is a mystery; His miracles are mysteries; His death on the cross for the redemption of the human race is a mystery. And the deaconess is to hold these mysteries as sacred, never doubting.

Let them be proved.

This important office is not to be entrusted to a "babe in Christ." But she must have proved that she possesses these qualifications and is willing to accept the responsibilities, labor and privileges that this high office demands.

Let them serve . . . if blameless.

After all these things, if they have a reputation for good works, peaceful ways, etc., among those in the church and those without, then let them serve.

Women.

The eleventh verse of this chapter sums up the qualifications for women in a few words, covering practically the same ground, "Women in like manner must be grave, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things."

Not slanderers.

The qualifications, grave and temperate, have been discussed; now "not slanderers" should be added

The Deaconess

to the list of qualifications. No Christian woman should be a slanderer, or given to gossip. Certainly these faults are not in keeping with the dignity of the office of deaconess. "Be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord" (Isa. 52: 11)—clean in person, tongue and mind. Surely a deaconess should ever guard her tongue and "keep her lips from speaking guile."

Faithful in all things.

Yes, faithful in the little things as well as the big things. Faithful in those things that can not be seen of men. Phœbe must have been faithful to have been recommended to the church at Rome in such a fine way by the apostle Paul. Many a deaconess will wear the crown of life because she has been faithful unto death.

Some of the early Christian writers indicate that deaconesses taught the children and ministered to the needy and unfortunate women and children. And thinking it over it is likely that that is true. Certain tasks seem peculiarly fitted for women's hands.

The Communion Table.

1. Some churches purchase the grape juice for the Communion, but others prefer to make it. The deaconesses see that the supply is ample.

2. In like manner some churches buy the bread for the table, while in others the women, feeling they would like to prepare it, bake it Saturday. Here is a recipe which one church uses:

Women and the Church

- 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups of flour
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of shortening
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of water
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoonful of salt.

Mix together, roll very thin, cut in squares and bake. This recipe makes 12 wafers, 3 inches square. It can be baked in one "loaf" if desired.

3. The deaconesses see that the linens are beautifully laundered and that the silver service is spotless. They see that the table is properly laid, in plenty of time and without haste. After the Communion, it is wise to see that that which remains is carefully disposed of.

Preparing the Communion Table is indeed the work of loving hands and hearts.

Other tasks which naturally fall to the deaconess are those in connection with the baptism of women and children.

Preparation for baptism.

The thrilling moment of baptism is sometimes fraught with fear and confusion because there is no kindly and sympathetic aid rendered the candidate. The deaconess may have the blessed privilege of assisting the women and girls in preparation for this important experience.

1. Robes:

Each church should have at least three sets of robes for women and two for girls: a large, medium

The Deaconess

and small robe for women and large and small for girls. The robes may be made of a closely woven woolen material which will not cling to the body when wet, or a rubberized material. If it is impossible to get such material, then use heavy outing flannel or something of that weight and quality. These may be made after the style of the graduating gowns or the simple kimona. The sleeve should be gathered at the wrist into a cuff adjustable to three sizes. The length should be long, and adjusted by the belt. A strip of cloth weighted with small pieces of sheet lead (necessary for immersion) may be pinned to the outside of the robe if the robe is of cloth. The weights in the robe wear it out quickly. The color might be white, light tan or light gray.

2. Instruction and prayer:

A few days before the baptism the deaconess explains to the candidate the clothing that she should wear. That evening, the deaconess is in the room, and quite often she finds quite a little nervousness on the part of the candidates, especially the children. She should be able to check this by speaking of the beauty and sacredness of baptism. When all are prepared and have been instructed, she asks them to kneel in prayer, and while praying that they may be faithful and steadfast, she uses the verse, "No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9: 62). After the prayer, she reads the beautiful story of the baptism of Jesus, and other Scriptures, until the minister is

Women and the Church

ready for them. She then conducts them into the presence of the administrator of the ordinance.

Truly it is a blessed privilege to assist a soul in this sacred hour. If the deaconess does her work well, the candidate may always look back on the experience as a time of joy, peace and holiness.

Other work.

1. Hospitality:

In the third chapter of First Timothy, Paul enjoins the elders to be "given to hospitality." Surely that characteristic should be found in a deaconess. In many other Scriptures, Christians are urged to hospitality, entertaining the stranger, etc.

"If after kirk ye bide a wee,
There's some would like to speak to ye.
If after kirk ye rise and flee,
We'll all seem cold and stiff to ye.
That one that's in the seat wi' ye,
Is stranger here than you, may be;
Add you your soul unto our prayer;
Be you our angel unaware."—*Anonymous.*

We need more Christian hospitality in our daily lives. Read the story of that "great woman" of Shunem. Let every deaconess and Christian woman take her for an example in Christian hospitality.

2. Caring for the needy:

Some one says, "With every organization having a committee to care for those in need, why should the deaconesses have that duty?" The deaconesses rep-

The Deaconess

resent the church. They help the deacons care for those who are needy. The men today are so busy in the competitive world they have little time for such work, but a perceiving, sympathetic deaconess can go into a home, and when she leaves she will know just what needs to be done. She carries this report to the deacon in charge, and they work out the problem together. It is a most important work, and a deaconess should see that the needy are properly cared for.

3. Helping the discouraged:

All about us are those in grief, in sorrow, in perplexity, anxiety and in every other state of mind. It is the work of the deaconess to carry the comfort of God's Word and human sympathy to such persons. Along with God's Word, carry a fitting poem. Grace Noll Crowell, out of her suffering, has written some poems that are most comforting and strengthening. We thank God for such Christian women and for the fruit of their labors.

Don't forget the happiness and comfort found in a five-cent card, a box of cookies, a garden bouquet, a glass of jelly and many other "homey gifts." And always remember the Christian comfort of a strong hand clasp and a sincere, earnest "God bless you."

4. Prayer list:

Every deaconess should know the names of those for whom her minister is praying; she, too, should take those names to the throne of grace each day.

Women and the Church

Truly the office of deaconess is one of activity. It is no place for the woman who is not able to "Seek ye first the kingdom of God."

What an honor it was to Phœbe to be known as the "deaconess of the church of Cenchrea," and what an honor to a woman today to be known as a deaconess of the local church. May those who hold such a sacred trust be guided in their labor of love by the Master; may they be strengthened by Him to serve with honor, respect and faithfulness.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What is the meaning of the word "deaconess"?
2. Why should every local church have deaconesses? What are the qualifications?
3. Discuss the work that naturally falls to women.
4. Why is there likely to be a haphazardness about the baptism if there is no office of deaconess?
5. Why is haphazardness at such a time most deplorable?
6. Discuss the reasons for a deaconess being "close-lipped."
7. Is a Christian woman ever justified in accepting such a position if she knows she has not the qualifications? Can not give the time?
8. Can a deaconess combine her work with the Calling Committee of the Ladies' Aid Society, etc.
9. Should a deaconess be a teacher in the Bible school?
10. Do you think the office of deaconess should have ever been abolished?

CHAPTER XIV

THE WOMEN'S COUNCIL

Proceeding upon the theory that the women of the average church need a central, united organization through which all their efforts may be co-ordinated, a growing number of churches have adopted what is generally known as the Women's Council plan.

It is sometimes true that a jealous and competitive spirit arises between Ladies' Aid, Missionary, Bible Class and Guild groups. There is little sense of a common purpose. Practically no effort is made to secure the co-operative action of all the women of the church in any enterprise.

In the benevolent work of the various women's organizations, for instance, there is much overlapping. The Bible Class, the Ladies' Aid Society and the Missionary Society all have committees to visit the sick. A woman may be member of all three and receive flowers and other attentions from all three, when much time, effort and expense could be saved by a united expression of sympathy. On the other hand, some good woman who is a member of the church, but not a member of any auxiliary organization, may be neglected altogether.

Women and the Church

Too often the usual organizations of women in local churches are so immersed in their material endeavors that they neglect to minister to the spiritual needs of their members. Almost no provision is made for devotional training and soul-nurturing exercise.

The Women's Council presents a united medium through which these and other problems may be solved and fresh momentum given to the whole women's program. Its promoters further believe that it gives all the women of the church a better chance to grow and develop in Christian character and service.

Besides the advantages named there are many others that members of a successful council are eager to point out.

Organization.

A constitution and by laws should be adopted by the group as early as possible. Those given for the Ladies' Aid Society in Chapter XI might serve as a guide. Of course, there will need to be some modifications and additions.

The membership.

All women of the church over twenty-one years of age are eligible for membership in the Women's Council. A special effort should be made to induce the young women to be present when the council is organized that they might have a voice in forming its policies.

The Women's Council

Officers.

Added to the usual set of officers is a Program Leader, whose duty it is to prepare or outline the program for each meeting. The duties of each officer are outlined in Chapter XI.

Groups or circles.

The Women's Council is divided into four, and sometimes six or eight groups, with a group leader or chairman who is responsible for the women of her group or circle. The group leaders are members of the executive committee. The group also has a secretary and treasurer, who cares for the records and the money of the group, giving the chairman or leader a full report of the group activities to be read at the council meeting. The set-up of these groups is often made by dividing the city or community into sections. That puts those who live in a certain section into a unit and, of course, facilitates the work.

The work of the group.

Each group is organized as a complete unit with a leader, secretary and treasurer and committees. It has its time of meeting and transacts its business and always reports the same to the council. It works independently of the other groups, giving its own teas, suppers, bazaars, plays, etc., but it must have permission of the president of the council before carrying out any activity. This, of course, is done to prevent conflicts. Each group makes the sick calls in its

Women and the Church

particular district; looks after the shut-ins, the absent church and Sunday-school members and reports on these, along with those who are needy, to the president and the minister. The meeting of the group is purely a business meeting, planning activities and making the report for the council; but it is the small group that accomplishes the work. As this group functions successfully, in that proportion will the council be successful. Great importance should be placed in the group.

The council.

The council meets once a month at the church, and this is usually an all-day meeting. The morning is spent in sewing garments or household articles or quilting for some charitable institution. The dinner is served by one of the groups, while another group has charge of the devotional period and the third gives the program.

The subject of the devotional period has been covered in another chapter.

The president calls the meeting to order and follows the order of business which the council has adopted. In this meeting each group leader renders the report of the activities of her group and gives the current receipts of that group to the treasurer of the council.

Sometimes the entire council plans some large project and this should be planned and discussed at the council meeting where all the members may have a voice in it.

The Women's Council

The program.

The program follows the business meeting of the council. All programs are under the supervision of the council program leader. This is necessary in order to avoid repetition and to secure a certain continuity.

Because each program is given by a different group, this feature of the work will have enough variety to keep it interesting. Some councils will enjoy programs which center about missionary activities, while others will enjoy reviews of missionary books and Christian literature. Some leaders will vary these programs with talks by some of the members who travel or by guest speakers. A very enjoyable program, which is often overlooked, is that furnished by stereopticon pictures. These pictures and the necessary projector may be secured, in most cities, at the public library. Studies in religious literature and art may also prove enjoyable and instructive.

Dues.

Those who have had experience with women's councils say it is much better to take up a freewill offering than to charge a stipulated amount for dues. If the fellowship of the council is such that the membership enjoys it, the business meeting carried on in a most businesslike manner, and the program made most interesting, there will be a large crowd and the freewill offering will be generous.

Women and the Church

Material assistance.

The Women's Council is organized for the purpose of assisting the church, spiritually and materially. The spiritual aid which a group of women can give the church has been discussed in another chapter and that is applicable to the Women's Council. However, since the new organization is a combination of the Ladies' Aid Society and the Missionary Society, the council should decide each year on the division of the money which it makes. Most councils give one-tenth of all money earned to missionary enterprises. The other nine-tenths is divided according to the needs of the local congregation.

All money made by the different groups is turned into the council treasurer and is voted out by the entire council. The treasurer should keep the money each group makes in a separate account and at the close of the year be able to give the total amounts given by each group.

Social life of the council.

In another chapter the social life of an organization has been discussed. Many of those suggestions may be used for the Women's Council. The different groups will want to plan social evenings for their members, but they should not be so frequent that the group becomes a little clique. The entire good of the Women's Council will be destroyed if the group leaders allow the groups to become clannish. The organization is for the upbuilding of the church of

The Women's Council

Jesus Christ, and anything which is not conducive to that end should be firmly put aside. If this idea is kept before the membership in a loving, positive way there will be little danger of cliques being formed.

General suggestions.

One minister stated that their council had "found it better to secure a president from some of the lesser-known women of the church than to take some one who might have rivals in leadership, so that no cleavage would be formed." This is a good idea. The president, of course, must be a leader, having tact, graciousness and executive ability; upon her and her leadership depends much of the success of the council.

In those churches which are not large enough to have groups or circles, the council will at all times function as a whole. In such a case it is almost necessary to have no president serve more than one year. In one year most presidents exhaust their store of ideas and the office becomes a burden. By changing presidents frequently it gives others the chance to develop their talents for leadership and executive ability and opens the way for new ideas.

The council should ever be alert to enlarge its membership and discover latent talent, for in such ways it grows and becomes the instrument for aid that it is intended to be.

Before any church dissolves its Ladies' Aid and Missionary Societies and organizes a Women's Coun-

Women and the Church

cil it should carefully study the actual operation of a successful council and secure all possible information directly from it. A Women's Council might not be feasible for all congregations; but it seems to be the solution of several problems in many churches.

QUESTIONS

1. What is the purpose of a Women's Council?
2. What advantage does it have over the Ladies' Aid Society and the Missionary Society?
3. Describe the organization of such a council.
4. Why can we not have one form of organization for each congregation?
5. What is the reason for dividing the council into groups?
6. How does this develop executive ability and leadership?
7. What is the danger of cliques and how may it be overcome?
8. Why is it important that the Women's Council lay special stress upon the spiritual aid they may give the church?
9. How can the council aid the church spiritually?
10. How does such a council help the women's Bible classes in many Sunday schools?

CHAPTER XV

WOMEN IN OTHER ACTIVITIES

The preceding chapters have discussed the work of women as teachers and callers in the Ladies' Aid Society, the Bible School Class, the Missionary Society, the Office of Deaconess—and still there are many activities to be discussed.

To all the women's work previously mentioned, we must add the prayer meeting; W. C. T. U.; production of plays and pageants; special-day programs; much of the music; teaching in the Week-day Bible School; the Vacation Bible School; counseling children's and young people's societies, Camp Fire and Girl Scout groups and other work that Christian women perform in their various communities.

Prayer meeting.

The churches that have given up the old-fashioned prayer meeting of forums, Scripture study and such have lost much power. We do need to study the Scriptures and we need the discussion such as the forum offers. But how we need to meet together to praise our Father, and to pray for certain things and for each other!

"Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall

Women and the Church

ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18: 19, 20).

Mary, the mother of John Mark, opened her home for the Christians to meet together to pray for Peter's release from prison; and as they prayed, Peter came to the door. The results would have been the same if only two or three consecrated, believing Christians had been praying. The strength isn't in the number, but in the faith and consecration of those praying.

If each church had a few such members who would meet together in prayer, great things would be done in this old world. May the day come soon, when Christian women will realize the meaning of these two verses of Matthew and return again to the old-fashioned prayer meeting.

W. C. T. U.

Never in the history of this country has there been so much liquor distilled and consumed. Never has the broad highway to destruction been so crowded. Every community feels the effects of this terrible thing. Every family is being affected by it, for crimes are committed hourly by those who are under the influence of liquor and lives are being snuffed out in accidents in which liquor is to be blamed; to say nothing of those who are being slowly but surely made into drunkards. Paul plainly says that "nor drunkards shall inherit the kingdom of heaven."

Women in Other Activities

Hundreds of boys and girls, men and women, every day are developing an appetite from which they find it almost impossible to escape. This craving for liquor will surely send them to hell. Maybe it is a loved one of yours, of mine. No one is safe so long as the use of liquor remains unbridled in our land.

Once before in the history of our country women rose up and said it could not continue. The time is here now when Christian women everywhere should throw the weight of their influence with the W. C. T. U. Every church should have an active chapter.

Plays and pageants.

Christian leaders are agreed that there is an awakened interest in the religious drama, such as they have never before seen.

Each form of the drama—religious plays, playlets, pageants, dramatized Bible stories and songs—gives a new, attractive way of presenting the old gospel truths; it presents an appeal to the eye and the ear that makes a vivid impression. It helps not only those who see it, but also those who have a part in it.

Care should be taken to select only the drama that is true to the very highest Christian ideals; and those who have a part in it should be taught to feel that they are rendering a real service to the work of the kingdom through that especial piece of work; that they, in this manner, are evangelists, who, through the dignity, sincerity and reverence of their presentation, can inspire those seeing and hearing

Women and the Church

them to live better lives, to live closer to the Master. Many persons have been led to confess their Saviour through a beautiful drama.

It takes patience and work to direct even a simple drama; and those who are in charge should make a thorough study of the play to be given, then ask responsible persons to take certain things to do in connection with it. In this way the work and the responsibilities are divided. It is much better to present a simple drama in a perfect manner than to attempt a difficult play and be unable to present it well.

Attention should be given to costumes. Many beautiful Biblical costumes can be made from old drapes, curtains, tablecloths, bits of trimming, etc. The Ladies' Aid Society is always happy to assist with these. When finished they should be kept for future programs. This would enable the committee to discard the idea of using bathrobes and such for costumes.

May the women of the churches use this new, yet very old, method of teaching and preaching the Christ to the very best of their ability and always to the honor and the glory of Jesus, our Redeemer.

Special-day programs.

Along with the drama which has been discussed are the special programs for special days. The task of planning these programs is usually given to a committee of women, who if they are given plenty of time are able to present worth-while programs on

Women in Other Activities

such days. One Bible school at its first council meeting of the year names the classes, departments or committees for each special day that is to be recognized that year. That seems to be a most constructive way of preparing for a year's program. The religious publishing houses and the entertainment publishing houses have some excellent program material. This can be carefully studied and those numbers selected which seem to be most fitting. It is seldom that a committee is able to get just the right material; sometimes it will need to be cut, other times more will need to be added to it. But always they should keep in mind that old adage—"If it is worth doing at all, it is worth doing well." These special days are planned so that prospects may be induced to come; therefore have something worth while for them to hear.

Music.

Most of the music in our churches is under the direction of a musician. But women are needed in the choir and at the piano. If one's talents are along this line, one should give them cheerfully, for it isn't every one who can render efficient service in the music department.

The Week-day Bible school.

Many Christian leaders feel that the thirty minutes Bible instruction which the children receive on Sunday is far from being enough, and indeed it is. In many towns and cities the churches have arranged

Women and the Church

with the superintendent of the schools to dismiss certain classes at certain times to go to the church for their Bible class. Here competent teachers teach a prescribed course, and the pupils are given a grade as in secular subjects. Since the Bible has been practically taken out of the public school, this seems to be the next best thing. This plan has met with enthusiastic support wherever it has been used. And every year sees more communities and cities adopting the plan.

The Vacation Bible school.

In many communities the Bible school plans to have a daily Vacation Bible school for two or three weeks in the month of June or July. This, too, is another way to supplement the meager amount of instruction that can be given on Sundays. The vacation schools which seem to be most successful are those planned and directed by the minister and a faithful corps of teachers. It takes much planning and many hands to execute these plans to make the school what it is intended to be. The publishing houses have many courses, and it is a matter of wise choosing to make a worth-while curriculum. The woman who can leave her home in this busy fruit season and give her time and talents to such an enterprise is certainly to be commended and appreciated. It is just another piece of work in the Master's kingdom for willing feminine hands. What should we do without the willing hands of Christ-loving women?

Women in Other Activities

Sponsoring children's societies.

Many churches wish to train their children in the art of leadership in Christian activities, and in practical Christianity. They feel that this can be done in the Intermediate and Junior Christian Endeavor and Missionary Societies. Again we find it is best to have a Christian woman who loves boys and girls, and who is interested in their Christian development to be their counselor and sponsor. Such a position calls for patience and tact. It is so much easier to plan a thing and do it than to stand by and watch youth wrestle with it. But in order to learn to do a thing, they must do it. So the sponsor stands by ready to help and advise, but the boys and girls must make the plans and execute them if they are going to be trained. Of course, they must be guided, and the wise sponsor guides with a word of praise here, a suggestion there, etc. She is rewarded in seeing them develop as the weeks pass.

Young people's societies.

Many older societies have a man and his wife for their sponsors and this seems to be the ideal arrangement. Besides the Sunday evening hour, they help the members plan many hours of recreation. That society is indeed fortunate that has a wise Christian couple for its counselors. The minister, too, must feel he has real coworkers when he sees a Christian man and wife giving their time and talents to the Young People's Society.

Women and the Church

Camp Fire Girls and Girl Scouts.

This movement among girls is most popular; and while some troops meet in homes and schools, others meet in the churches. It is a worth-while work and the Christian woman sponsoring such a group can witness much for Christ. Her influence here can never be measured. The eyes of youth read their leaders, and they respect sincere, honest, earnest Christian women.

There are other problems peculiar to each community that require the services of church women, and church women are not known to shirk any duty that seems to be theirs.

But some one says, "We can't do all the things discussed in this book." No one person can do everything; our talents are different. We must decide where we can work the best and then work with all the strength we have.

Watch for just one day the number of minutes that are wasted. It is appalling the time that is not profitably used. How is time wasted? Well, one woman said she cut her telephone calls and saved many a half hour. Another said she quit reading the murders, etc., in her daily paper. Oh, yes, minutes can be saved and those minutes can be spent in growing a more Christlike spirit.

Luther said, "The fireside is the center of Christianity." And that is why we labor to make the home a Christian home, where children may be brought up "in the nurture and admonition of the

Women in Other Activities

Lord." God give us strength and courage and wisdom and love as we labor.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Why should there be a prayer meeting in every church every week?
2. Is it necessary to have fifty people at a prayer meeting to make it one of power?
3. What does the Scripture teach about it?
4. Do we live a life of prayer?
5. Is your church a praying church?
6. How can we make our churches praying churches?
7. What early Christian woman must have believed in prayer?
8. Why should every woman be a witness against liquor?
9. What can Christian women do to eradicate this liquor evil?
10. Why does there seem to be so little sentiment against intoxicating drinks?
11. How can one account for the awakened interest in religious drama?
12. Is the drama a form of teaching?
13. Why choose a drama carefully?
14. What should be the attitude of those in the cast toward the drama being presented?
15. Why should the costuming receive careful attention?
16. Why special-day programs?
17. Why do some communities sponsor a Week-day Bible school?
18. Is the daily Vacation Bible school worth while?
19. Why should older persons be willing to sponsor Intermediate and Junior Christian Endeavor and Missionary Societies?
20. Why do Christian women labor as they do?

CHAPTER XVI

"SHE HATH DONE WHAT SHE COULD"

MARK 14: 3-9.—And being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on his head.

And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of the ointment made?

For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor. And they murmured against her.

And Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me.

For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always.

She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying.

Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.

Jesus had come to Bethany and His friends were giving a dinner or banquet, an expression of their love and devotion. John tells us that it was Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, who, wishing to show her love and gratitude, anointed with costly ointment His hands and His feet and then wiped His feet with her hair. It was a great sacrifice made readily, willingly, and lovingly for Him, her Master. Jesus tells us that this act shall always stand as a memorial for her who "hath done what she could."

"She Hath Done What She Could"

What a wonderful commendation—"She hath done what she could"! It was not a little gift, it was a costly gift and very likely represented all she had. With it she anointed her beloved Teacher—prophet, priest and king—for His burial; and how her heart must have thrilled when she heard His beautiful words of commendation! The perfume of the ointment filled the house, and while it has vanished long ago, the sweetness and fragrance of this beautiful deed grows each time we meditate upon it.

Mary was privileged to perform a beautiful service; beautiful in that it was unselfish, and prompted only by her love, gratitude and appreciation. That was what won the Master's approval and called forth those words of praise—"She hath done what she could." And women of today have the same glorious privilege of serving the same Master, for did He not say, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me"? (Matt. 25: 40).

Women owe much to the Christian religion and the Christian legion owes much to women. As Deborah of old inspired Barak to go forth to battle victoriously for Jehovah, so many women are still inspiring sons and husbands to do great things for the Master.

Women have always served the church in a humble way. They are still serving with very little recognition of the value of their work and the effort they spend. But they take heart when they read the glorious accounts of the women mentioned

Women and the Church

in the New Testament, and note how Jesus, the Christ, depended upon the faithful ministration of feminine hands as the women made their gospel tours. In talking with the Samaritan woman at the well, He proclaimed His Messiahship for the first time, and she, forgetting her pitcher of water, ran to tell her friends about Him. Martha was privileged to be the first to receive the greatest message of the Bible—"I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live" (John 11: 25). Mary Magdalene was the first person to see and speak to the risen Christ, and she, obeying His instructions, ran to tell the glorious news to the others. The disciples did not believe, and men since have been skeptical of believing that women could and should carry the message of the risen Christ. The four daughters of Philip were known everywhere as women who prophesied. Paul, although called in a vision by a man from Macedonia, did not hesitate to sit down with a group of women praying by the river side and tell them the story of Jesus, and immediately they believed, and Lydia must have become an evangelist. At any rate there was no place where Paul had more loyal converts or greater success than in Philippi. This church seems very close to him in that his letter to them is free from rebuke and disappointment.

Yes, in the life of Christ woman was His humble helper; in death she remained near to comfort Him; and in His resurrection she was there to receive His first message and become the first evangelist. What

"She Hath Done What She Could"

a glorious heritage has been handed down to the Christian women of today!

It is a great privilege to be a Christian woman. On every hand there are many opportunities of working for our Saviour and countless opportunities of witnessing for Him. Are we always ready to serve and to witness? Do we grow in grace each day?

A NEW START

I will start anew this morning with a higher, fairer creed;
I will cease to stand complaining of my ruthless neighbor's greed;

I will cease to sit repining while my duty's call is clear;
I will waste no moment whining, and my heart shall know no fear.

I will look sometimes about me for the things that merit praise;
I will search for hidden beauties that elude the grumbler's gaze.
I will try to find contentment in the paths that I must tread;
I will cease to have resentment when another moves ahead.

I will not be swayed by envy when my rival's strength is shown;

I will not deny his merit, but I'll strive to prove my own;
I will try to see the beauty spread before me, rain or shine;
I will cease to preach your duty, and be more concerned with mine.—*Selected.*

It is so easy to give excuses; Jesus calls our attention, in the fourteenth chapter of Luke, to the excuses offered by men bidden to dine. Have you ever noticed how many obstacles can be overcome in order to do the thing one really wants to do and how many excuses can be found to prevent one from

Women and the Church

doing the thing one doesn't want to do? Oh, it is so easy to say, "Let Mrs. B - - - - do that, she can do it better than I." And without a doubt Mrs. B is the women in the church who will offer no excuse. She is the woman who does much more than her share because others do not wish to be bothered. But make no mistake, Mrs. B - - - - is the one who gains from the sheer joy of service.* Those who give the little duties to others are the losers—they are to be pitied.

But says one, "I can not teach." There are thousands of Christian women who can not teach, speak, write or lead. They do not have the gifts that these responsibilities require, yet the lack of these special gifts excuses no one from service. Every woman can pray. And one of the things most needed in this world today is the earnest prayers of consecrated Christian women. On every side we hear God's name taken in vain; we hear those things we hold sacred ridiculed by unbelieving tongues; we see mothers' sons and daughters walking down the broad path of destruction by way of the liquor and crime routes. We must pray as never before. We must hold high the Christian torch given to us by Mary who did what she could. For we can be assured that if faith and Christianity die out in this country, it will be the woman who will pay the price, and if (and we pray God it will) it reaches new heights it will be through the prayers and inspiration of Christ-loving women who have determined that they will do what they can. Yes, indeed, it is time for the women of

"She Hath Done What She Could"

all Christendom to plead the blood-stained lintel,
not only for her own family but for her neighbors.

MY PRAYER

I will travel the upward road today,
I will keep my face to the light;
I will pray each day as I go my way,
To do what I know is right.

I will aid the prodigal on the road,
I will cheer the weary with song;
I will speak words kind, to sad ones I find
This day as I fare along.

Let us be honest with ourselves. Have we done all we can? If we are truly honest with ourselves we shall bow our heads in shame and acknowledge to our blessed Saviour that we have not done all we could; we have fallen far short. Let us remember the minutes we waste each day that can be given to Him who has done everything for us, and resolve that we will give more time and more effort to the work of the kingdom.

Yes, from the time of Mary there has been a grand succession of noble, faithful women who have done what they could. While it was not precious ointment which they poured, it was the balm of love and sympathy and help for "the least of these." And the loving Christ, who said, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me," must have said many, many times of unnumbered faithful women, "She hath done what she could." And millions of women

Women and the Church

have rejoiced and are rejoicing today that they are able to serve their Master with willing hands, alert minds and loving hearts. May the Christian women never cease to pray for a vision of the work to be done and the strength to do it. May they never be content with a little service, but gladly and lovingly give, like Mary of Bethany, all that they have.

Why should I care if no one knows

The deeds I gladly do?

I know my blessed Master sees

And gives me visions new.

I only hope my Master feels

That what I do is good,

And that some day I'll hear Him say,

"She hath done what she could."

THE LADIES' AID

We've put a fine addition on the good old church at home.
It's just the latest kilter, with a gallery and dome.
It seats a thousand people—finest church in all the town.
And when 'twas dedicated, why we planked ten thousand down;
That is, we paid five thousand—every deacon did his best—
And the Ladies' Aid Society, it promised all the rest.

We've got an organ in the church—very finest in the land,
It's got a thousand pipes or more, its melody is grand.
And when we sit in cushioned pews, and hear the master play,
It carries us to realms of bliss unnumbered miles away.
It cost a cool three thousand, and it's stood the hardest test;
We'll pay a thousand on it—the Ladies' Aid the rest.

They'll give a hundred sociables, cantatas, too, and teas;
They'll bake a thousand angel cakes, and tons of cream they'll
freeze.

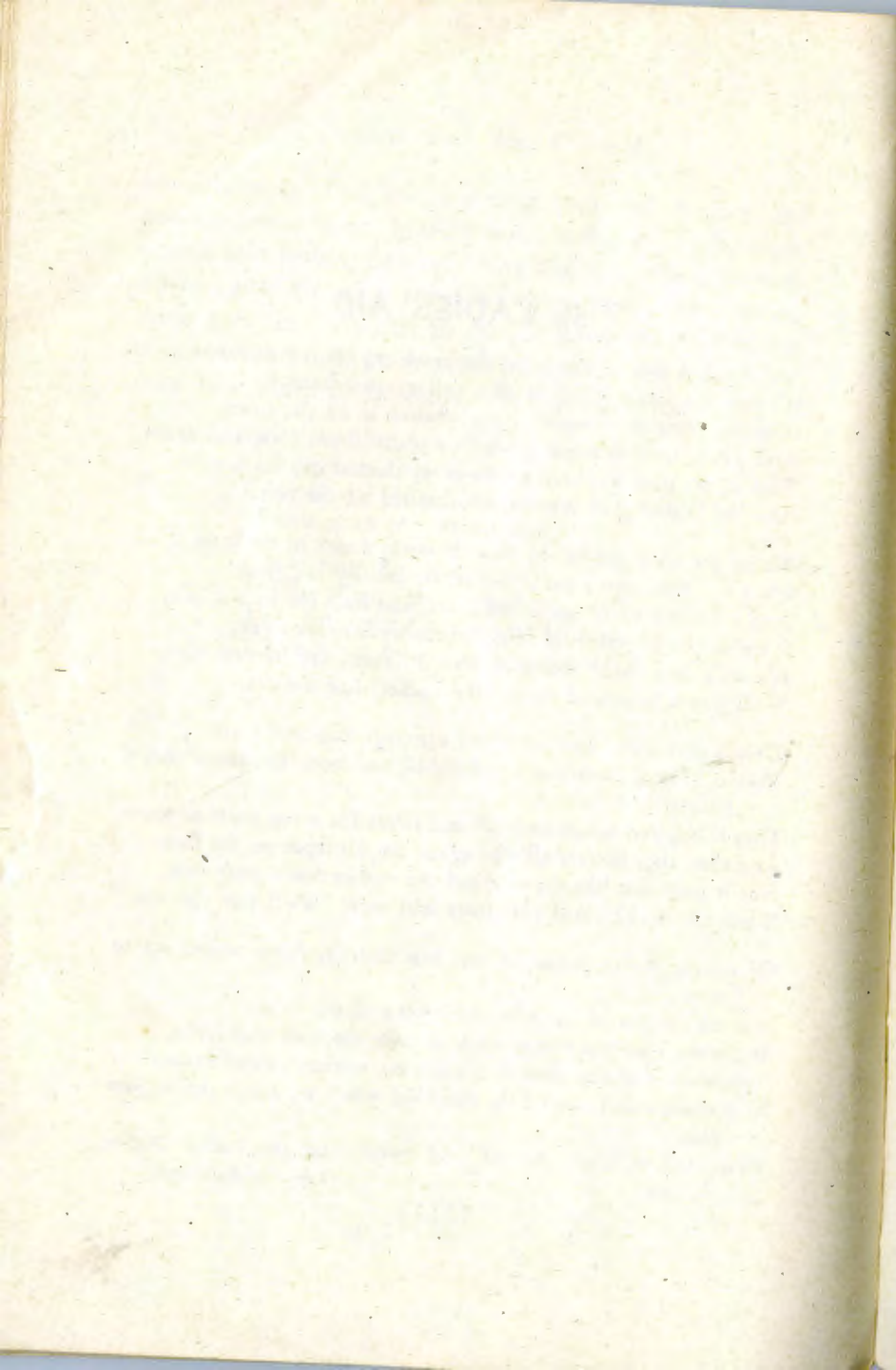
They'll beg and scrape and toil and sweat for seven years or more,
And then they'll start all o'er again, for a carpet on the floor.
No; it isn't just like digging out the money from your vest,
When the Ladies' Aid gets busy and says, "We'll pay the rest."

Of course, we're proud of our big church, from pulpit up to
spire;

It is the darling of our eyes, the crown of our desire,
But when I see the sisters work to raise the cash that lacks,
I somehow feel the church is built on women's tired backs.
And sometimes I can't help thinking when we reach the regions
blest,

That men will get the toil and sweat, and the Ladies' Aid—
the rest.

—*The Presbyterian.*



BENEDICTIONS

1. May grace, mercy and peace, from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ, abide with you alway. Amen.

2. The Lord bless thee, and keep thee:

The Lord make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee:

The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. Amen.

3. Blessed be the Lord the God of Israel,

Who only doeth wondrous things:

And blessed be his name forever. Amen.

4. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all generations for ever and ever. Amen.

5. May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord my strength and my redeemer. Amen.

6. The Lord watch between thee and me, when we are absent one from another. Amen.

7. O continue thy lovingkindness unto them that know thee; and thy righteousness to the upright in heart. Amen.

Benedictions

8. Let thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us, according as we hope in thee. Amen.

9. To the end that my glory may sing praise to thee, and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give thanks unto thee forever. Amen.

10. The Lord will give strength unto his people; the Lord will bless his people with peace. Amen.

11. Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait I say on the Lord. Amen.

12. Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the Lord forever. Amen.

13. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Amen.

14. Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation. Amen.

15. So we thy people and sheep of thy pasture will give thee thanks forever: we will shew forth thy praise to all generations. Amen.

16. Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands, establish thou it. Amen.

17. The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore. Amen.

18. Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. Amen.

