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ART. I.—THE CHURCH ARMY.

HOW to reach the masses has been the special question before the Church for the last half-century. Before that time it cannot be maintained that any very serious attempt was made to evangelize them; the population of town parishes was so large, and the machinery at hand so inadequate, that even the best of men had to leave the work undone.

In the year 1836 a new effort was made to supply the deficiency of Church-workers by the establishment of the Church Pastoral Aid Society. It was founded with the object of making grants for the employment of additional clergy in populous places, and also with the view of securing the services of pious and discreet laymen as helpers to the clergy in duties not ministerial. This introduction of the lay element as part of the existing machinery of the Church led to considerable opposition, and great efforts were made to induce the committee of the Society to abandon that part of their scheme; but, beyond some concessions in details, it still remained in its integrity. The strength of the opposition to lay help was shown in the establishment of the Additional Curates Society, in which, as the name itself implies, no provision was made for the employment of suitable lay workers. The Bishop of Exeter, Dr. Philpotts, wrote that he preferred the new society, "especially as it is free from an objection to which, under any modifications, the employment of laymen as recognised assistants in a permanent character can hardly fail to be exposed." It is clear, therefore, beyond any question, that to the Church Pastoral Aid Society belongs the credit of being the first in the field to recognise the necessity of lay agency. This was specially acknowledged by the present Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol, who, in 1872, observed that to this society "belongs the great and lasting honour of

having, notwithstanding much opposition at first, invited lay assistance to aid in the blessed work of evangelizing the masses."

The action of the Church Pastoral Aid Society in utilizing the service of Christian laymen was followed up by the Scripture Readers' Association in 1844. Since then, though lay help has multiplied on every side, no fresh distinct organized effort was made, with the exception, it may be said, of the Lay Reader movement, before the period of the Salvation Army.<sup>1</sup>

The operations of the Salvation Army were clearly a departure from all previous modes of work, and in their character were more aggressive and pronounced. The authorities of the Church were much divided in opinion, but generally it was felt that it was not desirable to take any active part against the Army, but rather to watch the result. Some clergy, indeed, went so far as to invite the detachments of the Army stationed in their neighbourhood to Holy Communion. Speaking generally, we think it will be admitted that the Army has not risen in public opinion, owing mainly (1) to a great lack of reverence, and (2) to the ignoring of the two sacraments of our faith. Yet the Salvation Army has, it must be acknowledged, certain good points about it. There is the definite effort made to band together men and women in a crusade against open forms of sin, and it pledges its adherents to lead honest and decent lives. When well officered, the excesses are restrained, and good aggressive work is more or less carried on. It was the contemplation of this good side that led the Rev. W. Carlile to feel that an organization on similar lines, yet in harmony with the Church, might be established, and in the year 1882 the Church Army first took the field as "a working man's mission to working men." The marching orders were (1) the real conversion of those living without God; (2) holiness of heart and life; (3) good, intelligent Churchmanship.

This enlisting of the services of working men and the banding them together in the interests of Christ and His Church is, we think, the most important movement that has taken place in recent years. The Wesleyans had from the first made use of laymen as local preachers, but they were drawn, for the most part, from the trading class; but to Mr. Carlile is undoubtedly due the credit of perceiving that, if the Church is to be in possession of the masses of our towns, and also, we may add, of our large country villages, it must be in a great measure through the agency of the working men themselves, and that

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<sup>1</sup> The London City Mission, working on what is termed a broad Evangelical basis, was established one year previous to the C.P.A.S.; and societies on a similar basis subsequently in all our large towns.

not by isolated attempts, but by a combined effort, working on a definite system.

The organization of this new agency, the Church Army, is in the hands of a committee denominated Headquarters. With them rest the selection and training of suitable candidates, the granting of commissions to officers, and the general oversight of them when they have taken the field. The more immediate control of the officer and the special character of his work lies with the parochial clergyman, who is perfectly free and unfettered. The great advantage of this system is to be seen in (1) The care exercised in the choice of suitable working men. "He is," according to the instructions, "to be a man of years of devout Christian walk . . . a man of sanctified common-sense, yearning for precious souls, believing in the possibility of the conversion of the worst, and willing afterwards to hand them over to the parish pastor to lead them further in the good way." (2) The definite instruction given them in the training-home. (3) The practical experience which is gained in the art of giving suitable addresses, conducting of open-air meetings, etc. (4) The change of officers, who are not allowed to remain in the charge of any station more than twelve months at the most. (5) That at the discretion of the Bishop the officers can be licensed by him, and, if desired, kept in the diocese.

The inquiry next presents itself as to what parishes are most suited for the operations of the Army, and what is the definite nature of the work. If in towns, to make the work effective, it is necessary that there should be a sufficient working-class population to cause it to be practicable to have meetings of one kind or another every day except one, which is an off-day; if in the country, a series of contiguous villages should be grouped together for the purpose. At first the work will necessarily be specially evangelistic—breaking up of the ground, heart-stirring addresses, with pointed illustrations calculated to awaken the energies of the soul, and causing the careless and impenitent to feel the need of conversion and renewal of the Holy Ghost; then those who are awakened will be invited to come forward, and to take, it may be, the penitents' form, the first in the room; or at the time of prayer, any who feel impressed and desire to be prayed for are invited to hold up their hands, and on one occasion were encouraged to do so by the Bishop of Marlborough holding up his. As the work goes forward there will be testimony meetings, where a few, at the discretion of the captain, will be invited to give evidence of what the Lord has done for them. Other meetings, such as holiness meetings, praise meetings, temperance gatherings, children's addresses, will follow as occasion may serve. If there be an early administration of

Holy Communion, the captain will very often gather together the more seriously disposed and have a short service with them before going to church. In the daytime he will visit amongst the people and strive to create an interest in the work by reading the Scriptures and prayer—in a word, he will be up and doing. If, further, the Church Army system is carried out in its integrity, the definite effort will be made to enlist soldiers, who by the regulations are required (1) to be communicants of the Church of England; (2) to be total abstainers from the use of alcohol as a beverage; (3) to confess Jesus as Lord with the mouth on all suitable occasions; (4) to wear the red cord, which is the badge of the Church Army, as often as possible. Such a body of men and women, gathered together after due probation, will tend very much to strengthen the hands of the captain, and to further the good cause of winning souls to Christ. The special character of the work will necessarily vary according to local circumstances and the wishes of the incumbent. In many parts a Church Army tent has proved itself of great service; in others, open-air preaching has been found invaluable; and there are parishes where a Church Army band has been instrumental in drawing many to the meetings who might not otherwise be induced to attend.

The question of expense has to be considered. The pay of an officer varies from nineteen shillings to thirty-two shillings per week, according to date of entry and number in family; but against this has to be set the collections which are made at every meeting. These may be looked upon to yield from one-third to one-half of the pay, the remainder of which is collected, as far as possible, from those who sympathize with the movement.

As to the general result of Church Army work, it will be variously estimated, according to the religious standpoint of different men; but the evidence of some very competent observers speaks most favourably of the results of the work. The late Lord Bishop of Durham, in his Charge of 1886, in speaking of the Army, observed: "The fastidiousness which shrinks from methods perfectly legitimate in themselves, but not commending themselves to refined taste, must be resolutely overcome." And as to its success he remarked: "I cannot for one moment doubt—the confirmations are visible proof—that in these parishes" (viz. Ven. Bede's; Monkwearmouth, and St. John's, Sunderland) "it has effected what no existing machinery could have effected: it has dragged numbers of men and women out of the gutter, has expelled the demon of drink or of some other gross vices, and has seated them, clothed and in their right mind, at the feet of Christ." When laid by from illness at Bournemouth, the late Bishop sent a message to the purport that "the Church Army had a very warm place in his heart." The Vicar of Ven. Bede's,

Monkwearmouth, alluded to by the Bishop, "rejoiced that soon after the Church Army came to his parish he heard the rattle of clogs on the chancel tiles, showing that the very poorest were drawn to value the Holy Communion." The Bishop of Bedford, Dr. Billing, bore the following testimony at the Training Homes anniversary: "I wish it to be understood that I do identify myself thoroughly with the work of the Church Army. Having ascertained its methods of procedure, and tested its work in different parts of London and the country, it has my entire sympathy. I say, God bless the Church Army! I am grateful to God for raising up the Church Army, because it has settled for ever one question which has distressed the hearts and minds of many—How the masses are to be reached." It would be easy to add to these favourable comments, but we must content ourselves with a notice with reference to Aberystwith:

The Church Army has certainly fulfilled our highest expectations. Fishermen, labourers, tramps, and others have been reached through the instrumentality of the Church Army. Frequent services in mission-rooms, in lodging-houses and cottages are held. A Sunday-school which is started is now in a flourishing state, and other means for influencing men and women have been established. The earnest, manly addresses of the captain appeal most strongly to men of different characters, and the result has been that drunkards have been reclaimed and scoffers brought to pray to Him whom they have blasphemed. For example, one of the waifs of the East-End of London, who had tramped down to this place in search of employment, and who before he came under the influence of the Church Army in the open-air meetings was a scoffer and blasphemer, is now a faithful and regular attendant at our services, and was confirmed on Saturday last. A number of people who had hitherto neglected to attend the means of grace provided in the Church are now regular communicants. And on Saturday last, April 6th, when the Lord Bishop of St. David's held a confirmation in our parish church sixteen soldiers were confirmed, and among those were two women and one man, whose ages were respectively 75, 69, and 72. The distinctive feature of the Church Army in this town is its work among men, the number of men attending the services being about equal to the number of women. We hope that the blessing of God may attend the efforts of the Church Army in other parishes as it has attended its efforts here.<sup>1</sup>

The testimonies here given make it plain that the Army is an undoubted success in many places.

What, then, may be said to be the causes of failure?—for that is freely confessed by the authorities. First, it is our belief that it is due to the character of the people: they are either respectable, decent, well-conducted folk, but without any religious sentiment; or, on the other hand, they are hard-headed people of a sceptical or socialistic turn of mind. The simplicity of the Gospel message is an offence unto

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<sup>1</sup> Church Army Report for 1888-9; full of interesting matter. The writer of this paper feels it only right to acknowledge his indebtedness to the publications of the Church Army, to which he would refer all who desire fuller information.

them, and if they are to be reached, they need the truth to be set before them in a more thoughtful and convincing manner than is possible by the average type of officer to be found in the Army. Where the work is most successful is, we are of opinion, amongst those who both feel and know that they are sunk low, and need a strong arm to be stretched out to them to lift them from their low estate. It is the old, old story: "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which is lost." Secondly, failure may be traced to the want of sympathy between the Incumbent and the Church Army system. If there is no cordial acceptance of the leading principles of the Army, it is necessarily impossible for the officer to work effectively—the wet blanket is thrown over him; or if he gives in, the failure is equally disastrous, for the officer is trained to work in certain lines, and if these are not those of him who for the time being is his superior, no good lasting work can result. We are not to be understood by these remarks as casting any reflection upon the parochial clergymen, but only as illustrating the old saying, "Two cannot walk together except they be agreed." Thirdly, a want of care in the selection of an officer may have resulted in the round man being in the square hole. As illustrating the first cause of want of success, there is a striking instance of a clergyman being very successful with the Church Army, but on introducing it into another sphere of labour to which he was appointed, it met with hardly any response.

The Army, it need hardly, perhaps, be said, is established on a very wide basis, and seeks to commend itself to the large body of earnest-minded, devout Churchmen who are yearning after souls; but it is probable that the extreme men of different schools of thought, with some exceptions, might find it difficult to work in harmony with it. Since it first took the field, the work so successfully carried on has been supplemented by the training and employing of mission nurses. Their duty is set forth: "To visit, nurse, and help the sick and poor; to conduct Bible classes and mothers' meetings; to assist in speaking and singing at Gospel meetings; and to do all the other (including rescue) work of a parochial mission woman, so far as it is leading up to the real conversion of the careless." This agency is necessarily on a much smaller scale, but where it has been tried it has proved itself to be a valuable auxiliary in parish work. Canon Money writes: "Our mission nurse is working with much encouragement, and we cannot be too thankful for her help. I feel that we have here a gentle, loving, yet powerful agent for good."

From the sketch we have given of the constitution and work of the Church Army, it must, we consider, be regarded as a most valuable adjunct to parochial machinery. Before its establish-

ment there was but little, if any, opening for godly men of the working class to carry on any active work for God in harmony with the Church; now, through the starting of the Army, everything is changed. Working men and women can be taken by the hand, taught, trained, and commissioned to speak to their fellows of the Gospel of the grace of God. They have an immense advantage: they know the habit and turn of mind of those they are called to address; they can speak to them in a homely and telling manner, and as a result prejudice is disarmed, for it is not all "parson's talk." Where the surrounding circumstances are suitable, the Church can come as a friend to do work which hitherto has only been partially done. It has been well said, "If the Red Lion is open every night, why should not the mission-hall be also?"

W. E. RICHARDSON.



#### ART. II.—A CONVERSATION WITH SUNDAY-SCHOOL TEACHERS ON ST. BARNABAS.

"I WANT to point you to St. Barnabas," said the clergyman to his Sunday-school teachers, "and to some undesigned coincidences found in the Scripture account of him. You have in him a new start in life and several important steps as the result of it. He is named the 'Son of Consolation' (*paraklesios*) or of 'Exhortation,' as the Revised Version has it—the effect wrought in him by the Paraclete, the Blessed Spirit promised by our Lord before He left His disciples. This one order of talent in him is the pearl of great price, as you will show the youthful members of our communion, from this teaching of the Prayer Book, in the Catechism<sup>1</sup> and in the Collect for St. Barnabas the Apostle.

I. "Barnabas was 'a Levite,'<sup>2</sup> and early brought into the Gospel. If you compare this with the after-statement of St. Luke, 'And a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith,'<sup>3</sup> you will see how the two statements dovetail into each other. If a forger had wanted to make the words in the one place fit into the other, he would have stated it more plainly. St. Luke says simply in the most natural way that Barnabas was a 'Levite,' and then, writing of the progress of the Church two years after, he refers to a great company of the Jewish priests coming over. The movement appeared at different times in the different orders of the ministers of the old religion. St. Luke's record shows us, in his undesigned,

<sup>1</sup> Catechist: "My good child, know this, that thou canst not do these things of thyself," etc.

<sup>2</sup> Acts iv. 36.

<sup>3</sup> Acts vi. 7.