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YOUTH CLUB TECHNIQUE

by

SID G. HEDGES



METHUEN & CO. LTD. LONDON

36 Essex Street Strand, W.C.2

*To
Doug. Griffiths
who made
M.A.Y.C.*

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INTRODUCTION

FOR a number of years I have been impelled to write one book after another on 'things to do in youth clubs.' There was such clamant need for the books, and the previous twenty years of my life seemed to have been a plain apprenticeship for the task. So, willy-nilly, fiction and most other work has just had to stand aside while I wrote of club-games, contests, activities, songs, epilogues, quizzes, and so on. But it has lately been forced on me that amid so many 'things to do' there has been but little on the underlying principles of youth club work. So I have called a momentary halt while I write of general technique and methods—though some 'things to do' have, I find, crept in. May this little work prove of real use both to old hand and novice among the leaders and workers in the fascinating and vastly important sphere of the youth club.

S.G.H.

CHAPTER I

A NEW CONCEPTION

THE future of what in England has come to be called Youth Service cannot be surely predicted. There are so many factors, known and unknown—the raising of the school leaving age, the gradual remodelling of the secondary school system, the eventual provision of County Colleges, the duration and character of conscription, the slow emergence of a 'Junior Youth Service' and of adult community centres—and so on.

But one thing seems clear—the Youth Club has come to stay. It was not new. There had been many clubs long before the government began to take a hand so usefully in work among youth. Such clubs had depended on keen voluntary workers, in the main. They were not numerous because the technique of club work was little understood, except by the few who had hammered working principles out of their hard experience.

Then came State aid for all the many special requirements of premises and equipment, which had so hampered youth club work before. There came also useful literature and training facilities, and an awakening appreciation throughout the country of how much could be achieved through the club method.

These things helped to bring what certainly is a completely new conception—that adolescent boys and girls should all have access to good youth clubs, just as in a rather different sense they have previously had access to good schools. What a youth club is, and the fundamental difference between it and a school, will be discussed in the next chapter.

So clubs have multiplied amazingly. They have been of three broad types :

First, the independent club or Youth Centre. These have generally the largest memberships and, superficially, would appear to be the most successful. They are often

sponsored by Local Education Authorities, with full-time or part-time paid leaders. They make use of schools, specially built premises, requisitioned houses or halls. They are not hampered by any church attachment, and the degree in which religious or moral training has a part depends entirely on the workers. At the best they are fine, vigorous community centres of the highest type, at the worst they are merely cheap dance halls and billiard saloons. In rural areas paid workers are less common, and everything depends on local voluntary committees and self-sacrificing workers. But in all youth centres of this type the local Youth Organizer, under the Education Authority, is able to take a considerable part in providing help and advice of every sort.

Secondly, there is the youth club attached to a church, Sunday school, or religious organization. These are generally smaller than the clubs or centres of the first group, because their appeal is restricted by their insistence that religion shall have due place; but they are extremely numerous, and are fast gaining ground because of the enthusiasm of those who sponsor them and the growing view among many that 'religion of the right sort' is a good thing. Perhaps the most remarkable phenomenon in the youth club world of recent years has been the growth, inside a single denomination, of the Methodist Association of Youth Clubs, which now has thousands of clubs affiliated with it. Church clubs, on the whole, are not particularly efficient. They rarely have trained leaders, and in most instances are compelled to use premises not at all adequate. Both these matters are steadily improving, and increasing help is being gained from local authorities—but there is scope for vast improvement.

Thirdly, there is the school club. This section is least developed, but seems likely to grow. Schools, particularly the new secondary schools, will be closely linked with all future developments of club work as visualized by the State. In the older, academic type of secondary school club work of a restricted kind, has been one of the outstandingly

successful features. It seems logical therefore to exploit this same thing in the newer forms of secondary schools. Already it is seen that one thing needed in many schools is the provision of club centre premises, and the addition of a single building to existing school premises can meet this requirement. Whether teachers can sufficiently adjust themselves to the very different needs of school and club, with the same boys and girls, has yet to be adequately proved. There is the complication too that staff people can hardly be expected to work in a school during the day, and continue to work in the school club during the evening. But real efforts are being made to find a way through such difficulties, and some educationalists see in the school club, and its trained staff, the nuclei of the young people's colleges of the future.

It is plain that these three types of club work embody radically different viewpoints. The first: youth work dissociated from the churches—though not necessarily unfriendly towards them, and separate and distinct from day schools, worked mainly by trained leaders with some voluntary help; the second: youth work based on Christianity and of an almost entirely voluntary character, though with trained paid leaders, comparable in status to parsons, increasingly responsible; the third: club work as an integral part of the general educational system, staffed by school teachers properly qualified.

Enthusiasts for any one of those views are unlikely to yield much in their advocacy, and each can make a strong case. The first rightly claims that the majority of youth at present will have little or nothing to do with the churches; the second state what is demonstrably true that youth work without a Christian basis can be a catastrophic error—as witness the *Hitler Jugend*; the third, that education is indivisible and all youth work should therefore be fitted into the general school system. Any attempt to impose one of these views on the whole country will certainly be strongly opposed by two groups of people. As time goes on one view or another will probably gain pre-eminence—he would

be rash who at present would predict which. Some sort of general fusion may be effected by which wide appeal, Christian emphasis, and sound scholarship, may all be retained in a new whole.

But at present the one thing on which all are agreed is on the necessity of youth clubs, which are quite distinct from the older and varied types of youth organizations. The general acceptance of this need for club life among adolescence is the quite new conception.

With this demand for clubs, comes the demand for people competent to run them. There are scores of men and women training for full-time club leadership at college, university, leader-training centre; there are hundreds equipping themselves for part-time leadership, by short-training courses, by correspondence study, by practical work; there are thousands without the means or opportunities for special training yet anxious to give what natural ability they have to the friendly guidance of youth.

Of the first group—to refer to them as ‘scores’ is certainly an understatement—there are many qualified day-school teachers who, from sense of vocation, have sacrificed immediate salary and future prospects, to take up club leadership. Undoubtedly there will be increasing opportunities for full-time leaders of the right sort, but the thing at present unsolved is what is to happen to the man or woman past middle age. The elderly school teacher is not at the same heavy disadvantage as the elderly club leader. Education authorities and churches employing full-time club workers must undoubtedly plan with greatest care the openings available for the later years, for in youth club work ‘too old at forty’ will have an unpleasantly convincing ring.

The second group have not the same reason for anxiety. To have a main occupation, and to fill in some time as a paid club leader, can be a happy state. In every style of club there is conceivably room for a reasonably qualified leader of such type—for only the really large centre can hope to maintain a full-time worker.

For the third class of worker—keen, but without special training—there will most likely always be scope, for even the best training cannot give the most vital requisities in club work, the personality and flair which makes some men and women at once *en rapport* with youth. In no sphere of education is personal influence so marked a factor as in club work.

The more this youth club movement progresses the more necessary it becomes to set it into its correct place in the general social, religious, educational system. There must be clarification as to the essential aims, so that scope and content of the work may be better defined and the kind of accommodation and premises required be planned, and the best sort of training given to prospective leaders and workers.

It was significant that the second published report of the Youth Advisory Council, appointed by the Minister of Education, was entitled: *The Purpose and Content of the Youth Service*. The earlier, first, report of 1943, was largely factual and descriptive—instead of theoretical and speculative. At the time of the second report fewer than 50 per cent. of the eligible boys and girls of the country had been brought under the influence of youth organizations. The position is little changed even yet. Much better must certainly be done. The question is how?

Well, one factor has been that many young people have left school before they were of an age to join youth club or youth centre. During the brief interim they have lost contact with older people interested in them, and have failed to make the necessary new contact, of their own initiative, with the waiting club leaders. Or they have grown slack and have just not bothered. With the raising of the school age and the foreshadowed development of a Junior Youth Service, with consequent junior clubs, this hiatus is likely to disappear. It has, of course, been obviated already where pleasant liaison has existed between day school and club, just as in the Sunday school there has been no gap because school and club have been practically one.

But the youth club has come into our affairs, bringing with it incalculable new possibilities. The conception of it as part of national life is generally accepted. What is now needed is to ensure that this new conception is interpreted worthily.

CHAPTER 2

YOUTH WORK PRINCIPLES

IT is easy, and proper, to say that the right premises are needed for club work. The club should include : games room, common room, quiet room, hobby rooms, workshops, office, chapel, committee room, library, music room, canteen, dressing and shower rooms, cloakrooms, as well as large hall with stage, gymnasium, playing fields, swimming pool. But let us admit that not one club in a hundred is likely to possess or even have access to all those things for many years to come. That does not prevent good club work being done, nor lessen the need for every club member and worker aiming at obtaining the best premises possible.

It is important to recognize that fundamentally a successful club does not depend on premises but on personalities. This argument need not be overstressed, for it might be stated with equal truth about schools—yet none but a fool would say that, given a good teacher, schoolroom and equipment do not matter. It is certainly true that Christ built up the world's most remarkable fellowship of young men, though he was a wanderer without a home ; and Socrates did some of the most successful teaching of all time, in almost casual conversations—but those conditions were not directly related to the results achieved.

In club work personalities rank pre-eminent. The function of the club is to develop individuals, not to regiment or discipline in the sense that army training does.

The modern secondary school, from which most club members come, can, and should have, a special function—to send out boys and girls trained to take their place freely and usefully in the general community. Education, in its narrow sense, has finished for the majority of them, or is in its closing stages, but they urgently need training in co-operation, tolerance, free decision, communal responsibility, and in things of the heart as distinct from things of the head, too. To give such training comes less within the scope of

familiar school curriculum than in the 'youth service' envisaged in the last chapter. This is within the club leader's particular sphere. He has to plan a program which will ensure a smooth, happy transition from school to working life. The club can form a sort of bridge for the adolescent. And it is the club rather than the school technique which will be necessarily the basis of such a program.

Let us be quite clear on the fundamental distinction between the two. To quote from that second report of the Youth Advisory Council: 'At school or at work a young man or woman is inside a relationship which is based on authority. It may be—it often is—the case that authority is very much in the background, and that neither the teacher nor the foreman has to wield a big stick either literally or metaphorically. But the fact remains that in the last resort the relationship between teacher and pupil or between manager and employee is one that is based on authoritarian sanction. In a club or a voluntary society the relationship is based on consent, and the relationship between leader and member is therefore different in kind from that between teacher and pupil. It is not a question of friendliness or affection; there may be more of that between a good schoolmaster and his pupils than there is between a club leader and his members. The point is that the club member can legitimately terminate the relationship simply by walking out. This difference of relationship is fundamental to the whole nature of a voluntary society.'

Incidentally, one reason why many day school teachers shrink from helping in clubs is because they realize how hard it will be to adapt themselves to this new relationship. Even when there is the will and ability to do it there is often the lurking fear that, with the same children, one's school relationship will be injured and work there made more difficult. Such fear, however, is seldom justified—one obvious proof is the great number of day school teachers who do splendid work in Sunday schools.

The broad distinction just quoted makes clear another point. The club relationship does not only differ from that

of school, but from that of work also. It is true that the club links school and work, and helps the transition from juvenile to adult society, but it also does something of vital importance which neither school nor work is similarly able to do—it allows complete freedom of action. The club thus becomes the place where youth can practise freedom and learn the benefits which can come from right use of it, and the harm which can also result from wrong use. That is the truest training for a living democracy.

If the club is to train these older boys and girls, outside their compulsory school or working hours, it can then only do so by their ready consent. Call it 'training' and their enthusiasm may be slight. Call it, and make it, recreation and there is much more chance of success. The young people must so much enjoy the leisure activities provided and the communal life available that in order to share in them they will gladly relinquish street lounging and frequent nights at the 'flicks'—that bane to which modern youth is so unhappily conditioned. The job of the club leader is not to enforce a prescribed program, but to stimulate enthusiasm so that members are insistent on worth-while activities. More than that—he or she must be prepared for transient enthusiasm, for youngsters quickly tiring of something which a little before they had been very keen about, and turning, a little blasé, for something new. That is the very nature of adolescence, and must not discourage the leader.

It is at this point that the desirability of co-operation with other organizations and fellow youth workers becomes apparent. That matter is dealt with in a later chapter, but it is appropriate here to say that the club leader should be prepared to gain help whenever possible from others. From the trained worker, whose specialized knowledge and experience can see easy ways through so many awkward practical problems, and from the untrained worker too, who may have wide knowledge and deep insight into adolescent character.

CHAPTER 3

PROGRAM AND SELF GOVERNMENT

THE youth centre, particularly if it is on Education Authority premises, is up against one major difficulty—the prejudice of boys and girls who feel that this evening program has a catch in it somewhere, and is just going to be a more or less camouflaged extension of ordinary schooling. And the leader, very conscious of this difficulty, is in some danger of reacting strongly to it and of ostentatiously preparing a program which is markedly recreational and has little or none of the serious stuff which makes up daytime lessons.

The youth club fostered by a church, and on church premises, escapes the same difficulties, but is faced with a very similar one. Youngsters, untrained in a Sunday school, may fight shy because they have no use for religion. Consequently the C.Y. (Christian Youth) leader is tempted to show that religion is not overdone in the club—by giving it much less place than he would wish.

Both these reactions are somewhat pardonable, but are serious mistakes. The function of Youth Service is not 'to keep young people off the streets'—that is a merely negative and incidental result—it is to continue, and originate, all-round education and development by a different technique, which is appropriate for the age and requirements.

Such an aim must be clear in the leader's mind at the outset.

It has not previously been said in these pages that a club, to be successful, must have a leader. The self-evident fact is not always appreciated. Leadership may come from the paid, trained worker, or the 'untrained' voluntary person—but if it is not in the club the club will languish. Leadership will have nothing, or very little, to do with official position or any sort of seniority—as it would in most other spheres, where big posts are so often filled by little people. Suit-

ability must be the decisive thing, and in the long run always proves to be. With a leader who is accepted alike by club members and adult helpers the recruiting of other workers can proceed. The leader, with his staff, will then clarify in their own minds exactly what they are intending to achieve, and how best they can get their results. The club thus does not drift along aimlessly, but moves purposefully towards a goal, with the goodwill and co-operation of all.

The training, or education, given to members of a youth club has little similarity to that given in a day school. It is not now a matter of imparting necessary information of how to add up figures or write legibly; of geographical or scientific facts; of vocational skills. It is instead a question of developing personality; of making each boy and girl a conscious, happy, eager, useful, co-operative member of society. That requires a full and carefully balanced program. Merely to provide the young folk with table tennis and a dance floor is just to shirk the whole problem. Yet plenty of adjudged successful clubs do only that. Probably the commercial dance hall is better than such a club, because it makes those who attend pay a heavier and fairer price for their amusement. Even the *Hitler Jugend* achieved much more that was good in the realm of self-discipline and physical well-being.

No, youth must have opportunity for full growth.

Youth must be able to find pleasant recreation in leisure—that involves recreational provision. His body must be healthily developed and fit—that means physical training and athletics. His mind must be alert, trained, receptive—educational and cultural spheres must be provided. His creative desires must be given scope and the manual skills which he has begun to practise in schooldays given larger scope—craft work of varied sorts are called for. He should be agreeably mannered, and a good mixer—that necessitates social activities. He is spirit, as well as body and mind—and religion must have its due place along with physical and mental parts of the program.

In short, the whole club program must be comprehensive and well-balanced, and that, as the club worker very soon learns, is much more easily stated than achieved. In a day school curriculum the teacher sets out with a similar idea of planning diversity, and it is achieved merely by adhering to a written time-table. But a teacher taking on work in a club, and using school technique, would find the ground completely cut from beneath him. The previous sanctions of authority would be gone, and without them the fellows and girls are just not going to accept what had previously been decided by authority as good for them. The mere fact that a thing is declared good for them will, in fact, almost certainly make them antagonistic to it. They come to the club by their own consent, not by any compulsion, and if anyone attempts to put something over on them without their willing agreement they will simply stay away. That is their perpetual and unconquerable defence.

So even when you have decided on the program of your club work, and found the people competent to put it across, you have still to get it accepted by the club members. That is where the vital principle of self-government comes in. Your club members must, as far as possible, control their own affairs and decide what they will and what they will not have. The measure of success of any youth club is the degree in which there is genuine self-government and yet a thorough all-round program. It is not enough to get self-government if the members decide to do nothing worthwhile; it is not enough to have a good program if the members have not chosen it and decline to co-operate in it. But self-government, with all its attendant dangers, must come first.

Nothing perhaps in club life is harder for the keen, competent leader than to allow raw, untrained members to manage, or mismanage, their own affairs. Yet they can learn only by experience and mistakes, and he must have patience to help them along unobtrusively so that they grow in ability and wisdom. That is true democracy, and sound club technique.

Such self-government by a freely elected club committee does not mean that self-willed young folk will refuse to have anything but dancing and table tennis and that the leader will stand by helpless and reluctantly acquiesce. He has this advantage: he can state that all the desirable amenities of the club exist within the framework of a planned, all-round program, and so can only be enjoyed by those who accept this premise. Freedom there will be, and right of choice, but the foundation of opportunity for full living, and training in the art of it, already exists in the very form and structure of the club, and cannot by the nature of things be disturbed. This being inescapable, the leader's task is reduced to that of guiding his members into wanting the best. An orchestra exists to make music, a chess club for the playing of chess, a savings group for the saving of money—motives, methods, standards in all of them may be most varied, they may be unworthy or admirable; but the fundamental character and type of activity is understood and accepted. So it is in the youth club, particularly the Christian Youth club.

The leader then must see to it that the members choose a good committee, and that the committee does the work for which it was elected. In early days he will tactfully help with nominations, so that the chosen members who form the committee are representative and able. Though a mixed members' committee, like a mixed club, is certainly best, it may be helpful when membership is large to have sub-committees, one for boys and one for girls.

The leader's job at a members' committee will be to act as an almost unofficial adviser. He will hardly ever obtrude or dictate, yet he will try diplomatically to ensure that right decisions are made. His difficulty will less often be to persuade the committee members to accept his suggestions, than to encourage them to have ideas of their own. He will be prolific with suggestions, for his experience and training will give him such advantage here.

Rather than raising the question of whether intellectual activities are desirable in the club, he will give the com-

mittee opportunity to discuss and make their own choice from a wide range of fascinating possibilities. In that way the members will adopt a sound program, of their own free will. It will remain for the leader to prove in practice that the enjoyment promised is eventually realized. Once club members have experienced the pleasures of an all-round program efficiently carried through, they will be unlikely to pine for a duller, restricted diet.

The other adult club helpers will have no place on the Members' Committee, except by special invitation. But they will have their own consultations with the leader and so help in general club direction. Their duties will be to help in the smooth running of the club, and to stimulate interest in the particular activities.

The Members' Committee may meet as often as once a week, preferably during club hours, or just before or after. The Helpers will meet less formally as often as is necessary.

But back of both these groups is the Management Committee, consisting of outside friends and supporters of the club—the Youth Council of a church, for example—who give the stabilizing background or foundation by which alone a club can hope to have a long life. The appointing of leaders, the securing of premises and finance, the assistance of club members in any time of trouble—all these things, and many more, are the business of the 'managers.'

CHAPTER 4

RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

THE best type of youth club program has, broadly, two sections—that in which members are free to do exactly as they like, and that in which they follow some particular activity decided on by their elected committee. In other words—free time and planned time. Often this clear distinction is not properly recognized, with the result that you have friction because a leader is 'interfering' all the time and members are quite conscious of the need to be free, for at least part of their club time, from all compulsion or discipline—these things belong so constantly, they may think, to school life and work, and even to home. On the other hand there may be reluctance of members to accept any sort of discipline for any part of their club program—even when it has been planned by themselves or their representatives. Both these errors cause much trouble in club life, and many club failures. But with the plain recognition that there must be both free time and planned time, comes more likelihood of club health.

At first thought the free time may seem of lesser importance, as, during it, the boys and girls will probably be 'doing nothing,' or just 'amusing themselves.' In one sense, however, this is the most important part of the club's function, for it means that they will be settling the use of their own leisure—and the right use of leisure is becoming increasingly a problem of modern life. The ability to buy ready-made entertainment, through cinema or radio, is perhaps the greatest handicap of modern youth, for it tends to smother the ability to entertain oneself and to produce feeble, mass-minded automata, instead of robust individuals.

Certain equipment is needed in order that members shall be able to use their free time pleasantly. In the main it will consist of games and reading matter. An open piano (for those competent to use it), and a radiogram, may be additional conveniences. Incidentally it is worth taking con-

siderable trouble to ensure that, of their own choice, club members do not have a perpetual noise background to all their free time—as can so easily happen if one-finger pianists and swing fans get unrestricted control of piano and radio. But remember that such things must be determined by free choice of all.

Games of skill, as distinct from those of chance, are also required. They are, in fact, the principal requirement. Table tennis, billiards, draughts, chess, are desirable; possibly darts. Cards are, by general agreement of experienced youth workers quite undesirable.

If possible there should be two table tennis boards at least, for this is the most popular of all club games. Some boys quickly become expert, and a few girls, and should have the privilege of using the better board; learners and others will, or may, be satisfied with the second table. As tables will be in keen demand all through the available time it will be necessary to have control and strict rota. The simplest plan is for couples desiring to play to put their names down on a sheet affixed to the notice-board—or have them put down by an appointed secretary. Then each pair plays its one, or three, games in proper turn. When many are waiting, a lot of 'playing in' should not be permitted—some players double the length of their time at the table by this excuse that they are just 'getting used to the ball' before starting a proper game. The advantages of having a prefect or secretary in charge of the play list are, that this sort of unfairness can be checked; that there is less likely to be squabbling, and that players can be notified of their approaching turn to play. In some clubs a deposit of threepence is asked for the ball, refunded at the end of play—thus preventing careless or deliberate damage—but this should not be necessary when a club is settled. Bats should be well-treated, especially rubber-covered ones; expert players should be encouraged to buy their own—this not only saves wear on club bats, but stimulates pride and care in games equipment. Tables and nets should be put up and taken down by members, maybe working on

some sort of rota, or in teams. The club leader must not do these things for members. Even when they chance to feel lazy at the beginning of an evening and won't bother to get ready for the play they want they must be allowed to learn the necessity of their co-operation and sharing of responsibility. Such little problems are soon outgrown by the healthy, well-guided club.

Draughts and chess outfits should be large and durable, and strong boxes or drawers for them are a great advantage. It is good to get an additional set of draughtsmen, for draughts get a great deal of use and odd men are so easily lost—it is, from this point of view, a pity that the traditional shape is round instead of being like the modern threepenny-piece. Chessmen should not be left lying about on tables in the same easy fashion that seems so inevitable with draughts, but should be in someone's charge, and lent out only on request, to be returned at the end of play. Both draughts and chess should be encouraged, by means of contests and tournaments, and there should be opportunities to study good play and technique for those who become really keen. Remember, for instance, that there are at least twenty forms of the game of draughts. It is a good plan to have books available on such games.

Shove-ha'penny, halma, solitaire, dominoes, backgammon, are less valuable, but quite useful. They too should be available on request, for occasionally in club life some particular game has a temporary vogue, and then drops right out of favour again. Ludo may be liked by young members. Monopoly is objected to by some club leaders as appealing so strongly to the acquisitive instinct, but it certainly fascinates young folk, though, because of its elaborate equipment of cash and so on, it should always be in charge of some responsible person. Lexicon, and forms of word-building games, have a less wide appeal, though an abiding interest for some.

The reading table should be spacious, be in a good light, and be plentifully supplied with chairs. *Picture Post*, *Everybody's*, *Readers' Digest*, *B.O.P.*, *G.O.P.*, *Ideal Home*,

Meccano Magazine, *Hobbies*, *International Youth Review*, *Cavalcade*, are the sort of things which can be bought regularly, as well as journals on aircraft, stamp collecting, gardening, needlecraft, and similar special interests. Money on these is well spent. But don't have the tables littered with back numbers—members may be glad to buy these week by week, there can be an auction every three or six months, giving purchasers the right to take used copies when new issues are put on the table.

Some of the girls and boys may like to have music for occasional spells of dancing, so part of the floor should be clear to accommodate them—unless they have a separate room. There is no need for them to make too much noise anyhow.

It is to be hoped that the club will have a library, in addition to its reading table, preferably in a quite separate room, and this too can be well used during free time. Its comfortable arm-chairs should form no small part of its attractiveness. The club will naturally ensure that its quiet room is always quiet.

With a good library of gramophone records of all sorts some members will be quite contented, putting on old favourites and exploring for new ones. Members will naturally bring along their own, but if new supplies can constantly be had by means of a lending library of records somewhere in the district, so much the better.

If your club has a garden of even the smallest size a few members will always be happy there—weeding, planting, mowing, tidying, or just lounging, and facilities for maintenance and general work should be available. Incidentally, a club allotment can be a very profitable venture, though the care of this would hardly come under the heading of free time.

But planned and provided activities of the sorts described still will not account for all your members during the recreational free time. Some will want to knit; some to sit and think; and some just to sit. Others may be at improvised gymnastics in a corner. Some will gossip at the club

entrance. Many will be round the canteen—of which more later.

Among them all the leader and his helpers can wander happily, having the ideal opportunity for the friendly chats and contacts which are at the very heart of their success. To know your members is the real beginning of sound club work, and there is no such convenient opportunity of doing this as during the free time. Adolescents so frequently feel the need of friendship and counsel from trusted older people, and the intimacy developed in such seemingly casual fashion in these periods of club life prepare the way for the confidences they so much appreciate.

It may appear that 'recreational activities' do not after all need much planning. Compared with 'educational activities' in 'planned time' they do not—or perhaps it would be more true to say that the planning is less obtrusive, and on that account requires even more care.

CHAPTER 5

PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES

THIS side of club life looks fairly easy to plan, but may in fact be rather difficult—because of that constant basic requirement that all activities must be enjoyable, otherwise the boys and girls just will not take part in them. To follow the physical training section of a school curriculum is a straightforward business, but within the club important new factors arise. Your girls and boys may have work to do at home, or for employers, which uses up a great deal of physical energy. Naturally enough, for instance, after doing a strenuous and tiring newspaper round a youngster does not require further exhausting exercise. Incidentally, getting young people to do things to the point of exhaustion is a dangerous error to which too many P.T. leaders are prone. There is no virtue in performing arm-presses up from the floor, for example, until the performer just collapses; nor in running until no strength is left—far too many young athletes get heart strain for life.

But that was digression. Apart from unsuitability of hard exercise for those who get the same thing outside the club, there is another way in which exercise may be distasteful—when such activities seem a mere revival or extension of things done during earlier schooldays. For with the coming of club life, to those who have left school, the young adolescent feels that a big step has been taken away from childhood. School belongs to the years left behind.

Again, club activities have to take place principally in the evenings, and this restricts possibilities considerably. Also, insofar as is practicable, they have to cater for both girls and boys.

Interest therefore must be the prime aim. To arouse it for the indoor program you must depend chiefly on recreational technique, putting fun into all your exertions. Young folk are not attracted to do things because the things are allegedly 'good for them,' as has previously been said.

A far stronger attraction is the enjoyment derived. For the outdoor side of the program, the most useful line to take is exploitation of competitive interest and rivalry—team games ; contests with other clubs ; competitions ; tests and standards of achievement.

Some things can belong both to indoors and outdoors, and equally both to boys and girls. These are the most useful of all. There are four in particular which find a place in almost every youth organization which has an all-round program—swimming, running, jumping, throwing. For a number of years I have strongly advocated that all Christian Youth clubs and bodies should recognize these for what they are, 'common activities,' and agree on standard tests by which members could compete and measure themselves, and so feel something of the unity which can so strengthen a youth movement—that fact was recognized and exploited as never before by Hitler in his *Hitler Jugend*, and *Christian Youth* is the obvious alternative to pagan youth. I have suggested that the *Standard C. Y. Athletic Tests*, for age 16, should be as follows :—

Swimming

Boys and Girls

1. Swim 440 yards ; 2. Scull 30 ft., head-first ; 3. Dive or plunge from bank ; 4. Within three minutes dive from surface and recover object from depth of 6 ft.

Running

100 yards in 13 seconds (boys) ; 14 seconds (girls).

(Other grades at $\frac{2}{5}$ sec. intervals.)

2 miles (boys) in 14 minutes.

Jumping

Long Jump, Standing : 6 ft. 3 ins. (boys) ; 5 ft. 10 ins. (girls).

(Other grades at 6-in. intervals.)

Standing High Jump : 3 ft. (boys) ; 2 ft. 11 ins. (girls).

(Other grades at 3-in. intervals.)

Throwing.

4-lb. medicine bag, one arm, 40 ft. (boys) ; 35 ft. (girls).

(Other grades at 3-ft. intervals.)

Target throwing with tennis ball. Target having a 2-ft. bull; 4-ft. inner ring; 6-ft. outer ring, and scores for hits being 4 points, 2, and 1 respectively, from distance of 30 ft. for boys and 24 ft. for girls. Five throws should be allowed and the Standard should be 12 points.

Age 16 is suggested and set for the foregoing tests. The under 16's should hardly be able to reach the level, and the over 16's should exceed them. The idea of having other grades, by adding, or deducting, the measurements suggested, would allow such four grades as: (a) Pass; (b) Standard; (c) First Class; (d) Special.

There is need for experiment and adaptation in all this, by club leaders, just as there is in still broader schemes until some sort of generally accepted County Badge scheme emerges. If young people are challenged to tackle such a program as these four activities, and not merely a single item for which they have particular aptitude, they are likely to find zest in the undertaking and satisfaction in achievement. Whatever may be said for or against the School Certificate of secondary education it at least provides a standard of intellectual measurement which has tremendous influence and prestige. A comparable measurement of all-round physical prowess would have most of the advantages and few of the defects of the 'School Cert,' and youth clubs should hasten towards obtaining this. By urging the church youth departments and national bodies to which they are affiliated it is probable that the C.Y. Common Standards may be gained.

By consultation with the local Youth Organizer, and co-operation with other clubs and centres, opportunities for such things as football, netball, hockey, cricket, camping, can be planned, as well as sports galas and meetings. Club teams for the various games should be run just as they are in schools, except that meets will be with other clubs and youth groups rather than with schools. When there are such events members other than the actual players can be encouraged to attend. Cycling runs and rambles can also be popular features of club life throughout

almost the whole year—they will be considered in a later chapter.

Reverting to indoor activities—it is the regular weekly stuff in gymnasium, or equivalent, which needs most care and imagination. As enjoyment must always be present it is best, in the straight program of exercise, to have a sort of non-stop variety of movement, romps, stunts, which keeps the young folks smiling and energetic, and leaves them pleasantly breathless and satisfied. To conduct such a program needs, of course, special knowledge, and to get novelty and freshness every week requires considerable inventive powers—but leadership facility comes with practice and increasing knowledge and friendship with the young folk. It is the 'come and enjoy this with me' rather than the 'go and do as I tell you' attitude which brings success. Pretty well the whole club should settle into these sort of activities, though it should be remembered that the club's 'medical adviser' should have discovered any members unfitted for particular exercises.

Try and get, also, specialized physical activities which are off the beaten track. Fencing is a good example. Single-sticks may serve for boys. A skilled instructor is needed for them, but if you can get one your young people will respond eagerly, for there is always a particular glamour in gaining an unusual skill of this nature. A handball court, even if it consists only of a back wall, can be equally popular with both sexes—handball makes an excellent all-year-round game—a good outdoor club equivalent of table tennis. Club swinging, ball punching, badminton, boxing, archery, rowing, are all possibilities. The club that has river or lake near at hand should certainly exploit boating in its varied forms.

Ring tennis is a game which is not sufficiently appreciated. It is much simpler than lawn tennis, yet is, in the view of many, quite as good a game. A 5-ft. net (or some substitute for it), the single rubber ring, the marked court (40 ft. by 18 ft. maximum for doubles), and you have all you need. Often the game can be managed indoors, with

slightly reduced court (singles need be only 9 ft. wide), for the ring is so much more under control than is a tennis ball³, and not at all fragile like a badminton 'bird.' Once the ring tennis habit has been acquired it can give additional zest to so many picnics, rambles, cycle runs, excursions, for it is so easy to carry a ring along with you and improvise court markings and net so that couples can compete in a quick knock-out tournament.

A last point. Adolescents are very appreciative of wise guidance on physical and health matters. Competent talks can achieve much in encouraging sensible keep-fit habits. The boy will enjoy a spartan cold sponge in the morning and readily do deep breathing before his open window once he gets interested in the inches of expansion his inflated chest can show. The girl, having once seen a chart of 'perfect measurements' will take some trouble to bring her own figure into healthy similarity. She will be glad of tips too that will improve her poise and self-possession. These adolescents have virile, turbulent young bodies, and how to develop and master them is very much their concern. In these years of club life there is ideal opportunity for preventing the cultivation of that pitiful outlook which thinks that manhood consists in knowledge of 'the dogs,' the newest current films, and an ability to have a cigarette eternally drooped from the corner of one's mouth; or that womanhood is achieved when one's lipstick is right, one's dance shuffle of the latest mode, and one's knowledge comprehensive on all matters relating to film and radio 'stars.' The club can encourage the healthy mind in healthy body outlook—maybe with early morning swim tradition, daily five-mile walk, and habits of personal cleanliness, abstinence from alcohol, purity—which can help so much towards not merely cheerful adolescence but a whole contented life.

CHAPTER 6

CRAFT ACTIVITIES

THIS side of the program is one of the most useful, and because of its wide scope offers greatest opportunity for bringing in outside help. Any keen man or woman who is an enthusiastic hobbyist with some craft is a potential helper. A large proportion of young people in clubs are those who have not proceeded to the 'academic' secondary schools, and manual skills are especially appealing to them. Educational authorities with school premises and facilities of craft equipment, materials, rooms and workshops, and trained instructors, are often able and willing to give all sorts of aid.

Thus, when you begin to contemplate craft activities for your club, you should take a really big survey of the district, and look even in most unorthodox quarters for possible assistance.

In physical training, there is no very marked difference between the things which are done, particularly in schools, between younger and older boys and girls—when the same premises and equipment are being used. One's program must therefore be planned with much care so as not to 'humiliate' the adolescent if you take him to a gym.

With the crafts program there is no such disadvantage in using the same workshops and tools as the younger boys and girls, because there is the saving distinction of doing more advanced and so quite different work. It does not matter to the senior making a wireless cabinet that a few hours before some youngster at the same bench was trying to plane up his first square of wood; or that the same club craftsroom table where the older girl is working at an intricate leather wallet a youngster has previously been making a little birthday card.

It is good policy in fact to build club craft work on the basis of what has already been learned, either at school or in junior club. Since participation in such work will be

entirely optional only those will join who are really keen and who want to carry their ability farther than earlier training could take it. Appetites are whetted if such training has been good, and the club is meeting a deep need by supplying opportunities for continuance.

There is still one further advantage of club handcraft—it provides much more freedom in choice of work than school can possibly do. The boy who wants to spend hours and hours preparing Christmas gifts need not have his time severely curtailed, as by a school curriculum.

It is good when ideal workshops, like those available by many schools, can be utilized for club crafts, but it is not an unmixed disadvantage when such facilities are not obtainable and work has to be done under heavy handicaps on club premises; there is in fact a very definite virtue in such conditions. The boy woodworker, for example, may do excellent work with the fine bench and tools provided by school, but when he tries to do similar work at home he finds himself probably with a kitchen table or an old box for bench, and the crudest minimum of tools. He must then abandon woodwork as impracticable, or learn to improvise and achieve good results under severe handicaps. A club can provide training in this very difficult, but most common problem. The same improvisation as at home may have to be done, but the difficulties can be overcome, under the guidance of a leader, who can concentrate on teaching just that imaginative improvisation, without lowered standards of work, which will make possible sound achievement in the home. It is a fact that hardly any of the boys who learn woodwork at school ever practise it at home, after a year or two of depressing failure to adjust themselves—and the club has a contribution of greatest value in helping over this problem.

Woodwork, needlecraft—for boys and girls separately; weaving for a mixed class, can therefore be most helpful adjuncts to the club program. Even if it is not possible to fit them in on ordinary club evenings that does not greatly matter, providing the young people take part in them as

club members. The club has to grow its own atmosphere. *Esprit de corps*, loyalty, and club consciousness, in the workshop or craftsroom, will be strengthened if the work has a club connection. For instance, the woodworker may supply quite a bit of club equipment—chessmen, draughts boards, notice-board, trays for canteen, tables, boxes for games stuff, 'office' necessities, jumping stands, wall plaques for club badge, photograph and picture frames, table tennis bats, boards for rings and quoits, and shove-ha'penny and other games. Needlecraft and weaving may provide table runners and cloths, aprons for canteen workers, curtains, banners, embroidered club badges, collecting bags for services, 'costumes' and properties for theatricals, lectern cloths, dust covers for club equipment.

Such activities as these are of first importance, and they should be linked with the club members' responsibility in schemes for renovating, decorating, cleaning club premises—which can help a great deal in making members feel that the club is theirs. A boy will take prompt and forcible steps to prevent someone scribbling on or defacing a club-room wall if he himself has recently cleaned and distempered it.

As in the physical activity sphere, so in the handcraft, I have long advocated that Christian Youth clubs everywhere should all do at least something in common. In woodwork the first thing to be undertaken should be a flat piece of wood with the letters C.Y. on it. This flat board can be shield-shaped or square—used for outside or inside wall decoration, or for the lid of a box. The boy squares, shapes, planes the wood, and marks out the letters. Then, with matt-ended punch, flattens down all wood surface except the letters and maybe a border round the slab. This leaves the letters raised and smooth on a sunken matt surface. The second, more advanced piece of work, which every Christian Youth member should be encouraged to tackle is the making of a box. The club can find a multitude of uses for boxes of all sizes and shapes. Clean, dove-tailed joints; fitted lock; C.Y. embossed on the lid.

The girls, with needlecraft, begin by embroidering the letters C.Y., and then work the letters on all sorts of things they can make for the club—badges, berets, lectern cloths, aprons, offertory bags, banner, and so on.

The sort of things available through weaving, in a C.Y. club, have already been suggested.

Leatherwork offers less scope for club service, but it has proved very popular in clubs because results can be obtained fairly easily. In the normal mixed club the boys welcome the opportunity of making handbags for their girl friends, and the girls like reciprocally to provide purses, comb cases, and wallets for the boys. Autumn is the ideal time for running a leatherwork course, for then presents can be prepared for Christmas. The Local Youth Organizer can be helpful in advising where and how to obtain materials for this, and other, craft work.

Plastics is another popular craft for both sexes, and one which is similarly most convenient before Christmas. Its scope is constantly enlarging and it is peculiarly fascinating because it is so new and in many ways experimental.

One of the chief factors, however, in your choice of crafts will be the availability of trained and practised leaders. Real knowledge and enthusiasm are essential if the keenness of members is to be set alight. Fortunately, the range of possibilities is very wide. *Bookbinding* may be linked with general interest in reading and books, the building of small home libraries, the maintenance of club libraries and magazines. *Etching* can be allied to other art work, and so in some degree can *poker work*. *String net work* supplies shopping bags and all sorts of useful larger and ornamental smaller things. *Fretwork* needs little teaching or supervision, and so can be practised by even one or two enthusiasts—the making of puzzles and toys is a serviceable method of providing objects for free distribution to poor children or for sale towards club funds. *Lino cutting and printing*, and *printing proper*, these connect naturally enough with club affairs through entertainment publicity, the club magazine, a wall sheet, the notice-board, tickets for club 'do's,'

calendars and Christmas cards. *Poster designing* is rather similar in its scope. *Metalwork* may partly furnish presents and decorative novelties, and partly be joined to club requirements, such as lighting effects for your entertainments. *Model yachts and planes*—these are of all-year-round interest, and depend more on facilities for work and practice than on expert guidance.

So one might go on—wood carving, stencil craft, rug-making, artificial flower making, soft toy work, sealing wax decoration, radio construction. There should be little difficulty in getting several craft groups going. Don't be too much concerned about the numbers in each. Develop real interest, and provide some convenient room or corner where work can be uninterrupted and where stuff can be safely stored. For some things the members will not even require so much—girls will knit quite happily round the fire, while boys sit with them smoothing away at yacht hulls.

Craft work will be much stimulated if you take a few technical and hobby papers regularly into the club, letting them lie on the magazine table. If the club cannot for a time afford them the boys and girls may bring their own magazines and loan them each week.

If possible have, at least once a year, some sort of exhibition of work done, perhaps joining it with an eisteddfod. Spring is an ideal time. Maybe much of your craft work—toy making for instance—can lead towards a sale or bazaar, and help to raise money for club or other purposes.

In all your craft work set high standards. Make only things which are worth making. The process of work can run in a sort of progressive cycle. Buy materials; sell products; buy still more materials; sell still more things.

So, in your craft work, you may help boys and girls, who may have all creative instincts thwarted by dull routine in their future working lives, to realize that in their leisure they can know the joy of creation and fine craftsmanship.

CHAPTER 7

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

BACK in the last century 'young ladies' had lessons in 'deportment'; clear enunciation was taught by repetition of such things as 'prunes and prisms'; 'young gentlemen' were drilled in 'what was correct,' and everybody who wished to be anybody mastered the contents of the easily procurable books of etiquette. What it all boiled down to was that young people of the 'privileged classes' were trained to comport themselves with ease, dignity, grace, unselfconsciousness, in the presence of each other and with older people too.

That training was not a requirement merely of Victorian days, something now outmoded and unnecessary; every group of adolescents in every generation has precisely the same need. You can see it very easily in some badly run mixed clubs—they are not mixed; boys and girls are both there, and uncomfortably aware of each other, but they remain in separate groups and attempt nothing more than bandying shouts and occasionally attempting a bit of mild horseplay. What they so much need is education in 'social graces.'

That is why social activities must have their due place in the all-round program of the club. Their purpose is just as definite as that of the physical training or craft work features, but the means of attaining that purpose is not nearly so well understood. Many talk as though 'social activities' were synonymous with recreational and games items. In part they are, but the 'social' with its fun and frolics is just one channel of training. The social activities of the club depend partly on an atmosphere to be created, and partly on things to be done.

The atmosphere requires first attention. There must be a friendliness and intimacy among the members; an appreciation of each other's qualities, as demonstrated in the varied activities of the club life; a readiness to give and

take.' And in this happy camaraderie the leader fits naturally, the confidant and adviser of all.

By far the most useful single factor in helping to make possible this friendly atmosphere is the club canteen. It is a place where odd refreshments, and supper, can be had at a moderate cost, and it is much more besides. Here is the chance for the leader to have real chats with members; here they learn the rudiments of hospitality; here the boys can practise the lesser courtesies—the standing when a girl comes to or leaves one's table, the reaching of a chair for her—and the girls can get the knack of paying or not paying for their own cup of tea with equal good humour.

A motherly woman should ideally be in charge of the canteen. She should have a real concern for the club's welfare, a liking for young people, and a flair for providing tasty and well-served meals. Helpers for her can be from inside or outside the club, or she may prefer to do everything herself.

What can, and should, be the most important thing in the creation of the 'club spirit' of unselfishness and co-operation is the religious background. The difference between the Christian and the pagan club can usually be discovered readily enough—that is matter for a later chapter.

The leader must always be alert to prevent the club settling into little cliques. Individuals will always be gravitating towards those of like tastes and clusters of friends will naturally form. But there must always be reasonable mixing and an appreciation of others, and programs will often have to be planned to help achieve these ends. It is the non-mixer who becomes so self-conscious and so lacking in social good manners.

The 'things to do' side of social activities are most varied. Dancing is one which springs to mind—and over which embryo clubs and club leaders usually have warm discussions.

Here is one point of view, as expressed by the leader of a large London mixed club: 'I used not to believe in dancing, as I was formerly the minister of a church in

which dancing was not favoured, nor indeed permitted. But I decided to try it here, for I was absolutely beaten by the problem of getting my 250 members to be anything but appalling young hooligans. They just had no manners at all, and the behaviour between the sexes was, to put it mildly, deplorable. We introduced dancing on two nights a week—and in three months the old uncouthness had quite disappeared. There was, instead, discipline and courtesy and a radical transformation in behaviour. The young people had become at ease in each other's company, and attained a degree of mutual respect which had not existed before.'

Another leader of another and rather similar club declared: 'Dancing is a disease. I have a couple of hundred members and they have just one idea of recreation—switch on the radio and dance. They refuse to have any other type of social evenings; they will not have any community games; they decline to sing, they are miserable and cantankerous if anything but dancing is introduced. I, and my helpers, like visiting members from other clubs, get heartily sick of this dancing craze, and personally I wish we had barred it entirely from the commencement of the club.'

But, despite that last view, most experienced leaders would agree that, properly controlled and restricted, dancing can be most helpful—if it does no more than teach a rather ungainly adolescent to move across a floor with ease and unconcern. Merely vulgar and erotic dances will naturally be taboo—in just the same way as alcoholic drinks are barred from the canteen and card-playing from the games room. Incidentally boys learn to dance much less commonly than do girls, especially in rural districts. It is therefore up to the club leader to see that congenial instruction is provided—private classes of some sort are best, for learners do not like to be on show.

Games parties and socials are even more useful than dances, if they are of the right quality. Group dances can be intermingled with the other items—these prevent undue absorption with one partner and ensure that those who

would be neglected in an ordinary dance get the same friendly attention as the rest. It is worth-while keeping in mind the fact that in the more intellectual type of games it is easy for those who do not shine to become extremely ill at ease, even unhappy—so plan a program which gives every sort of member an equal chance of enjoyment.

Games, and stunts, can fill odd half-hours of ordinary club nights but occasionally socials should be full-dress affairs occupying a whole evening. The boys will like the opportunity of putting on their best suits and the girls their party frocks, and the pleasant degree of formality about the whole occasion will be enjoyed by all for it will give members the satisfying feeling of being quite at home when things are 'done properly.' Even to cross a room when most others are sitting is a terrifying ordeal for many adults, merely because opportunities of acquiring poise and *savoir faire* were not afforded them in youth.

Suppers and banquets are useful for much the same reasons, and should find a place once or twice a year. A well-laid table, attractively lit by shaded lamps; a several course meal—which need involve no cooking; toasts, speeches, musical items interspersed—that is fine. Young people rightly like to do things 'in good style,' and the club may be the only place where they can have opportunity for such affairs. The youngster who for the first time sees how toasts are honoured feels that he has grown in stature and is more able to face the big adult world. If he actually proposes such a toast, or responds to one, he may be in such a state of nerves that he will eat no supper at all, and when the time comes may do no more than falter out a few stumbling words, shattered remains of carefully prepared sentences, but when he sits down amid applause from all round the table he will know such glow of satisfaction as he will never afterwards forget—and one which may well kindle a new spark of ambition and self-help determination in him.

Singsongs can fit into almost any sort of indoor or outdoor social occasion of the club, and they are potent in making

young people lose their self-consciousness. The difficulty is in getting the right songs, with all their words. It really is astonishing how few know even the most familiar songs. The club should therefore have an adequate supply of *Youth Club Songs*. One interesting feature of club singing is the naturalness with which members change from the most flippant to the most serious and sacred kind of song, with equal enjoyment—to supply every type of requirement inside the same comprehensive book is the purpose of my next published work, *The Youth Club Sing Book*, which will comprise hymns, songs, and fun songs. (Suggestions, especially for the latter section, will be gratefully welcomed from readers.)

For outdoors—hikes, picnics, rambles, camps, give much the same opportunity for social activities. One of the easiest to plan is the ramble, occupying either half-day or evening. An interesting jaunt, with some point of interest to be reached, and a leisurely saunter back—that is the sort of thing. If a ‘campfire’ supper can be arranged on the way home so much the better. Cooked, or part-cooked, provisions can be carried so that the fun of warming up is quite a trifling matter.

A final suggestion—let the club members sometimes be the hosts at a parents’ party. Their social graces will certainly be in full use then, and they, the parents, and the club generally will benefit accordingly.

CHAPTER 8

INTELLECTUAL ACTIVITIES

GETTING over this side of a program effectively is a real test of leadership ability. The fellows and girls are ready and receptive enough for the recreational, physical, manual, social, spiritual—but they most often kick against the intellectual and cultural. The reason is generally that it has little or no place in their home environment and also that it can so easily seem a mere extension of school studies—when school studies have been abandoned for the sphere of daily work. School studies have usually left no particular yearning for more. To do is so much easier than to think. Many habits of their adolescent lives—cinema going, newspaper glancing, radio listening—all militate against independent thinking. Apart from the club they are fast becoming, in all probability, incapable of forming personal opinions and receptive only to mass suggestion and propaganda. If it is put to them that you are out to improve or uplift them they certainly will most vigorously, and maybe rightly, resist.

Of course one way over the dilemma of making members desire these intellectual activities is to make them compulsory—if you want to dance you also must attend an approved educational class ! Many clubs use that method, hoping that compulsion may gradually become unnecessary. And occasionally the method does get the desired results.

But, fundamentally, no club activity is worth much unless it is undertaken with the consent of the members. Your first task therefore in urging this educational and cultural sphere is to ensure that it shall be palatable. Be wise as a serpent, and harmless as dove. A few titbits to lure on the young people ; a few pleasant surprises so that their appetite will be whetted, and soon there will be enjoyment and eagerness for the feasts that will follow.

Nothing is more useful in opening up than ‘quizzes.’ The popularity of these nowadays is as widespread as that

of crosswords. With a varied, light, not difficult, set of questions, and two teams competing, your girls and boys will soon forget their nervousness. And once they are used to hearing their own voices expressing opinions and making considered statements in the presence of others your biggest obstacle will be overcome. Be careful to choose your quiz lists well, so that no one section of members score all the points—the great attractiveness of the well-chosen quiz contest is that every sort of knowledge wins reward, so that while one may have reason to be proud of his acquaintance with poetry, another may be equally thankful for his intimacy with printing or plumbing. Plan your quizzes with the personnel of your teams in mind. And—don't use either juvenile or adult quiz lists if you hope for best results.*

Don't be impatient in developing this side of club activity. Don't rush things. Your aim is to lead members on to free discussion, so that the problems in their own minds—of behaviour, belief, relationships to others and to the larger world—so that these things can be talked over intelligently, and conclusions reached. To get them talking is your job, and there are many ways in which you can make it easier for them.

The *Group Discussion* is good, for it involves merely talking in a small group, and the group can be as small as you choose. Choose your leaders; set each with just four or six; let each have perhaps fifteen minutes to sort out their views on some topic close to them, like *What four improvements does our town most need?* or *The two strongest and the two weakest points of our club*; then have each leader out to report from the notes he has taken on the group findings. In such group discussion it is important that your questions are clear and appealing, so that the time spent shall seem to produce findings of some value and interest. It may or may not have been helpful to have an introductory talk from someone, but it certainly is necessary that group members shall know exactly what they have to do, and the time they have in which to do it.

*See *Youth Club Quizzes*, Methuen.

Brains Trusts are similarly good—if they are well prepared. Bright, well-varied questions handed in beforehand ; a breezy and alert question master ; five members who are knowledgeable and audible—they are the basic requirements. But a brains trust is seldom successful if it is impromptu. The quality of questions, and their diversity is too important to be left to chance. The question master must see that they are handed in beforehand, and must be prepared to invent some if he does not get what he needs. Their order must be varied, so that factual, serious, flippant, topical, personal, all have their turn. A long table with the five members—similarly selected because of their diversity—sitting behind it, and the question master at the end—that is a useful arrangement. The Q.M. reads the question, then calls on members, in any order, to speak, allowing them not more than a minute and a half—a concealed light may flash to warn them at 75 secs. and stop them at 90 secs. Each member can have a small card in front of him (a playing card will do), when this is turned face downwards it signifies that a member does not wish to be called. No member should have seen the questions beforehand.

The *Fireside Chat* is a more intimate thing. It needs a friendly, cosy atmosphere—everyone sitting or squatting easily round a fire, with other lights out—that is ideal. Then all depends on the leader. He begins talking about, anything—politics, religion, sex—and gradually draws others into the talk, with friendly informality. In the really successful club this is perhaps the most fruitful form of intellectual activity, for it brings out the things that are really in the minds of the members. There is need, however, to restrain the too talkative, who are liable to monopolize the time, just as there is need to draw out the hesitant and nervous.

Debates are worth-while, and they are much easier if you brief plenty of members beforehand. Suggest aspects of the question which they can think over in advance. Otherwise, in early attempts, you may have none but the proposers and seconders on their feet. Have due formality in debating,

with a firm chairman, and have the motion properly put to the meeting at the end, to be carried or rejected.

Talks from outside visitors can be most helpful, providing the speakers 'talk' rather than 'lecture,' and have the knack of drawing questions and discussion. Folk responsible for public services can come and talk about what they do; members of different trades and occupations can describe their jobs; 'personalities' can stimulate and inspire. It is surprising how willing the most able people frequently are if you approach them on behalf of youth. If you believe in youth work, as you should, then you need never hesitate to approach the most notable folk.

Shadow Groups imitate the technique of such bodies as parliament or local council, and deal with the same, or with other matters, using a similar technique. Sometimes a club may have a parliament in which all club affairs are settled, instead of in the more usual club committee—there can be Ministers for Home and Foreign Affairs, a Chancellor of the Exchequer, and so on. A 'council' can thrash over the topical local business of the urban or borough body—this is an excellent aid to the development of keen and responsible citizens. It should not be difficult to get some member of the local council to come along and explain methods of procedure and so on at the outset, or to arrange attendance as visitors at occasional council meetings.

In the *Study Circle* a textbook or set subject is worked through by home study and periodic meetings for revision, discussion and comment. A useful plan is to take the book section by section. A member can give an outline or commentary on the pages to be studied at one meeting; then all study at home; at the next meeting another member, or several, may add findings and comments on it, before the new section is introduced. Many points of disagreement will probably emerge after the week's study, or queries which other members may elucidate through discussion.

The *Reading Circle* is rather similar, except that a book rather than a subject is taken bit by bit. It may be some great work of fiction, like Tolstoj's *War and Peace*. At each

group meeting one member gives a resumé of the week's reading ; it is talked over, and someone is appointed to give the summary next time. It is helpful, though not essential, for each member to have a copy of the book for home reading—though it should be hoped that interest aroused will later result in reading as opportunity comes..

Impromptu Speeches. Many enjoy the fun of these, and the practice they provide in ready, extempore speaking. A good way is to let each member write a subject on a slip of paper—' something he would like to hear the others talk about ' ! Each member's name is then written on a second slip. The two piles of slips are kept separate, and mixed. Then a topic is drawn, together with a name of the one who is to stand up and speak on it for not less than one minute.

Nothing has yet been said about that large and popular sphere of intellectual and cultural activity, dramatics. The club should certainly aim at producing plays, for in some part of production almost every member will be able to take a share. But get plays that are worth producing. There are plenty of good one-act things with which you can start, and find those plays if possible which are unencumbered by royalties and which have been properly licensed by the Lord Chamberlain. Many inexperienced club producers have difficulties over these two points. A good introduction to producing your own plays is to take your members to see first-class professional productions and to have discussion on them afterwards. Play reading can follow. You will need a copy for each reader—the local librarian or youth organizer can probably help you here. Be prepared to read a short play several times—first in plain, straightforward fashion, then a more dramatic reading, and finally a full portrayal as if on the stage, though with members reading their parts.

Music offers another wide cultural field. You may begin with community singing, and develop to a choir ; or start with a few harmonicas, and end up with a full orchestra. There are far too many music listeners and too few music makers these days. Let your members hear the finest music

by the greatest exponents, by all means, but urge them to share the creative joy by training their own latent abilities.

Sketching and painting too come into the wide cultural realm, needing also the technician to teach and the enthusiast to inspire. Many clubs have live and successful art sections. Some go even on to sculpture, by way of wood carving and clay modelling. To know and enjoy something of pictures and architecture, and of nature—these things offer yet further possibilities. Once the eyes of the mind and the soul have been opened and imagination kindled the whole wealth of human treasure and achievement and of nature's own beauty await discovery.

Obviously, books will have a big part to play in all this side of the club's life. Not only should the club have its own library, but it should do everything possible to make its members closely linked with whatever libraries, art collections, and such-like, may exist in the neighbourhood.

Later chapters will have close bearing on this same general topic of educational, intellectual, cultural activities.

CHAPTER 9

SPIRITUAL ACTIVITIES

OUR Service of Youth is weakest at its most vital point—the religious. And it is here that weakness is most perilous. Most experienced club leaders are probably agreed on what has been said in the preceding chapters, and in the majority of clubs activities physical, social, manual, intellectual, are believed in and even attempted. But ‘spiritual’ activities are much more rare. There is in many a reluctance to introduce religion. Such an attitude is most dangerous and harmful. Its logical result was made horribly plain by the Hitler Youth, from which all Christian teaching was banned. There is even now peril that English youth may become similarly pagan, not so much by deliberate intent of those who lead as by their neglect or default. To train boys and girls as though the spiritual side of their nature did not exist is a calamitous thing.

The interdenominational *National Sunday School Union and Youth Service* and such denominational bodies as the *Methodist Association of Youth Clubs* represent many thousands of clubs and insist on the religious basis, and other national associations have become very aware of the same need, and urge it on their members, but still the unhappy fact remains that in a great many youth centres and clubs religion has no place. Yet, as I have already urged, the only practicable alternative to a British pagan version of a *Hitler Youth* is a *Christian Youth*, and a Christian Youth with a world outlook and sympathy. It is beginning to be appreciated that in this atomic age we must either become a united world or perish—and the unity of the human family has been the theme of the greatest religious leaders since Old Testament days.

Fortunately, ‘religious activities,’ properly conducted, rank high in the estimation and enjoyment of young people. The problem lies in interpreting ‘properly conducted.’ It has not necessarily any connection with conventional

services or churches—but it should not be too readily assumed that these two things therefore do not matter. They most certainly do, for in them and in modern Sunday Schools in particular is a wealth of experience in voluntary religious education.

One common mistake made in introducing religion to the club is to bring in the parson to take charge of it. That immediately detracts from its reality. It is the club leader or a helper who should as naturally take 'prayers' as take part in table tennis or discussion.

The adolescent has a very definite attitude towards matters religious. During childhood he has accepted things merely because they have been told to him by grown-ups. Now, at the early teen age, his own reason begins to assert itself. There is questioning, testing, doubting, and many of the early simplicities just melt away. To discourage the boy or girl who challenges the truth of curious Old Testament incidents, or Biblical contradictions, or some recorded miracles, or, worse still, to blame and scold, is the surest way to bring all Christian belief into disrepute. The understanding leader will guide through such intellectual difficulties, and even introduce new obstacles that they may the more quickly be overcome. Thus the wisely helped adolescent comes to have sure convictions, and to experiment in putting to the test the teachings and claims of Jesus. It is religion as a way of life rather than a code of doctrine which interests the club member.

Such things as these involve discussions—and there is ideal opportunity on Sunday evening, when club members badly need somewhere to go after about 8 p.m. Attendance at some service, where youth is understood and appreciated, may well precede such club opening. As a general rule it is not wise to hold regular youth services at the club as a substitute for attendance at churches: there are enough, sects as it is, without splitting off a new denomination of Club Christians! But an afternoon service, particularly in the winter, is a good idea. It can very conveniently be linked with an existing Sunday school under some

such distinctive title as Christian Youth Fellowship, catering, of course, only for those of appropriate age. This practice of 'worship' is just as important a 'spiritual activity' as the reasoning and discussion already referred to.

It should be remembered that the ideal form of adolescent worship has probably not yet been devised. The conventional forms for adults, practised in every church, are familiar enough. Sunday schools and Children's Churches have evolved a suitable technique for those of less than youth club age; but for the adolescent there is little precedent and no recognized custom. The practice, often tried, of using either the adult or the child worship form should be discouraged. There is need for experiment and bold unconventionality. One method is to work out one's own combination of those elements in common worship which undoubtedly appeal to youth—the silence times of the Quakers; the dignity of the Anglican forms; the colour and light of the Catholics; the robust praise of the Non-conformists. With these, the romantic and heroic appeal, coupled with some newly traditional ritual; the frequent avoidance of archaic language and meaningless phrases; the use of modern Biblical translations like the Moffatt and Weymouth—all these things help.

The club attitude towards Sunday is very much related to the club's whole religious life. Worship and attendances at services do not occupy the full evening—what shall be done during the other few hours? To settle this is no easy matter, but it is worth much thought.

Sunday must not seem a day of taboos—a day when this, that, and the other, cannot be done at the club. That attitude on the part of a leader, brings an automatic reaction of hostility from members. Yet many things, normally practised in the week certainly should not be done on the Sunday. Not that they in themselves are wrong, but that they would tend to make the Sunday seem just like any other day. And it ought to be different; finer; better; enjoyable in a loftier way. Games can give way to friendly chats; radio light entertainment and music hall, to better

music, talks, good drama ; canteen, with its buying and selling atmosphere, can be replaced by ' family supper ' at the club's expense. Draughts and chess may not seem out of place, but table tennis and billiards do not fit so well into the picture. A play or poetry reading circle is more appropriate than a General Knowledge Quiz hour.

But it is best not to dogmatize. Good taste and sensibility of Christian values are the best guides. It really is important that the character of the ' day of rest ' is preserved—every worldly encroachment on it brings, demonstrably, deterioration of national character and morals. Somehow the leader must search for the method of making Sunday in the club seem a day when all sorts of happy things are done, rather than a day when so many desirable things are not done. In a later chapter many talk topics are given which can be helpful.

The Christian Youth club should whenever possible be closely linked with a Sunday school, and older club members can often find congenial opportunities of service on the school staff, as helpers in the Primary, teachers of junior classes, assistant secretaries or librarians. The modern Sunday school, with its developed grading into departments and teaching devices of expression work and project methods, offers much scope for young people trained to assist the various leaders and teachers. Most such schools have their weekly Preparation Classes which often become a sort of additional club evening for study and pleasant fellowship to staff members of all ages, and thus helps young workers towards the adult fellowship of the Christian church.

But sometimes club members will want to go out for rambles or excursions on Sunday, or those will who have no school or other obligations. It is good, in such circumstances, to plan that the cycle run, or whatever it be, aims not only to enjoy the summer or autumn liveliness of the open air, but to make as a sort of goal a visit to some village church or other place of worship. Let the character of Sunday be preserved and the rightful custom of worship be naturally remembered. Incidentally, as it is against dull

sermons and feeble preaching that young people most often fulminate, take pains to impress on them that personal and communal worship are of vastly more importance than the utterances of the 'preacher,' and that even a bad preacher can be helped and can be helpful because of a worshipful congregation.

Incidentally, a hymn singsong is often much appreciated—if sufficient hymnbooks are available.

But spiritual activities can have their place in the week as well as on Sunday. A 'family prayers' or 'epilogue' can well close any normal evening. There has been, probably, physical, social, intellectual, handcraft activity—what more natural that this further aspect of living should have its place. An epilogue need take no more than five minutes—a restful silence; maybe a reading or recited poem or most brief talk; a prayer—and all feel the evening rounded off most fittingly and satisfyingly. The experienced leader can 'feel' the atmosphere beforehand, and may sometimes decide that it is no night for an epilogue—but that is usually before the club has settled into a happy unity of friends.

Like everything else in the club that is worth while, the spiritual activities will not be forced on unwilling members, but, wisely guided, the members themselves will come to insist on them, and will often like to conduct them.

If it can be arranged, let your young people occasionally conduct the whole evening service at their church, without any help from grown-ups. To put the entire responsibility of planning the service order, according to their notions of effectiveness, and to give them a free hand, is generally an inspiring and often quite humbling experience for older people who wonder 'if these boys and girls can be trusted to do things properly, especially the sermon part.' Generally, all the guidance needed is a general preliminary talk on the principles and aims of Christian worship. It is usually much less difficult than might be imagined to get two or three club members to give brief addresses which occupy the time length taken by an ordinary sermon.

Finally, much less ought to be said about the obligation of young people to attend church, and much more about the obligation of the church to make itself worthy of attendance !

CHAPTER 10

PROGRAM OUTLINES

TWO-NIGHTS-A-WEEK programs for a whole year are suggested in the following pages. It is assumed that 'free time' will occupy some part of most of the indoor evenings. Games and dances, the sort of organized things in which all take part together, will probably be so frequent in the club that it is unnecessary to list them here.

It is easy to substitute 'courses' in craft work or anything else for which tuition is available, for the items suggested—program must always depend so largely on the personnel of the club workers and their particular aptitudes and interests, as well as on the desires of members.

These items given are therefore mainly for that troublesome second part of a normal club program, dealing with the intellectual and cultural activities, or with a whole evening or afternoon. An epilogue is understood always as finishing the evening, so this also has not been included in each program list—just as free time and canteen interval have not, nor the taking of subscriptions and markings of registers, or whatever is the equivalent procedure.

Five weeks have been given to the long months. The number under the month refers to the week in the month. Thus the total of programs is 110. The (a) nearly always will be an evening suggestion; the (b) may be, but very often it will be something for a Saturday afternoon, or even a morning.

January

1. (a) Members talk on 'Books I have Liked.' (This will not be impromptu; members will have been canvassed and persuaded beforehand. The wider the range of books, and the more honest and frank the views, the better.)
- (b) New Year's Eve Party. (It should ideally go on till 11.30, and finish with a 'Watchnight Service.' This means a long evening, needing many-

- items to prevent enjoyment flagging, and a refreshment interval put fairly late.)
2. (a) Debate. (Plenty of topics are elsewhere in this book.)
(b) Snow and ice games outdoors. (If weather is mild you can still have strenuous games, preferably outdoors—or a brisk hike or cycle run.)
 3. (a) Beetle Drive, or some other type of progressive games party. Lexicon—providing you have enough sets—is a good alternative.
(b) Indoor campfire singsong and yarns. (Get as realistic a 'fire' as possible. Have books of words for your songs, and a harmonica or some instrument to accompany, or at least to ensure right pitch. Warn everyone beforehand to come prepared to tell at least one funny story. Supper can be planned to taste.)
 4. (a) Brains Trust. (Questions should be sent in beforehand, but if you are short or lacking in variety, you can make up from the lists given in this book.)
(b) Saturday afternoon skating, or indoor 'Choose your own games' evening. (A good plan is to let everyone write down a favourite game on a slip of paper, and then to draw slips haphazardly—though the leader should have discretion to suppress any which are duplications, or unsuitable.)
 5. (a) Making toys—or an 'everyone make something' evening. (The things made should preferably go towards some sale or bazaar.)
(b) Visit to local pantomime, or to a concert or lecture of special interest.

February

1. (a) Talk on health, cleanliness, keeping fit. (A doctor, may give this, or a nurse, P.T. instructor, health visitor, or anyone really competent and interesting.)

- (b) A story evening. (A skilled storyteller is ideal, but without such a person have two or three good short stories read by different people—they should have looked them over beforehand. Have dim lighting, and cosy informal grouping of listeners.)
- 2. (a) Sausage supper, and singsong. (There may be fun in having things burned and inefficiently cooked—but things go so much better if you take pains to ensure that they are done well.)
 - (b) Club visit of church officials, and talk on 'The Church.' (If several church officers speak briefly on 'The job I have to do' it can be both helpful and interesting.)
- 3. (a) Impromptu concert. (Impromptu only in the sense that there will have been no elaborate rehearsing, and none at all on club premises. Only club members will be present, so none need have qualms about attempting items. Fill up, if necessary, with a singsong or with an 'I want to be an actor' item.)
 - (b) Museum visit. (A consultation with the authorities beforehand may make possible a properly conducted tour.)
- 4. (a) Debate or discussion. (If the boys chose and led off the last one, then let the girls be responsible this time.)
 - (b) Invitation frolic or social, or dance—each member bringing one friend.

March

- 1. (a) Each team or house prepares and gives a fifteen minute program of entertainment. (Original sketches should be particularly encouraged. If the club is not organized on team or house lines then split into groups for this occasion.)
 - (b) Visit to art gallery, or to some place of historic interest.

2. (a) 'Making things from scraps' evening. (This needs some preparation and thought, and probably the help of some outside people. The articles made should be for later sale.)
(b) Quiz corner. (General knowledge questions. Take particular care that every sort of person stands a reasonable chance of scoring, because of the wide variety of topics.)
3. (a) Pencil and paper games, and a spelling bee. (It is good to get team rivalry in this program.)
(b) Theatre visit. (If there is a repertory company in your neighbourhood the chances are that reduced prices will be allowed for regular club visits.)
4. (a) Holy Week service, at club or church. (Each gospel tells different parts of the crucifixion story. It is good to piece them together and read the whole narrative. A number of selected members can take part, each following on smoothly. The whole reading, as given here, takes about twenty minutes: (1) Matt. 26: 47-49; (2) John 18: 4-8; (3) Matt. 26: 51-58; (4) John 18: 12-13; (5) John 18: 18-24; (6) Matt. 26: 67-75; (7) John 18: 28-38; (8) Luke 23: 5-11; (9) Matt. 27: 3-5; (10) Matt. 27: 15-34; (11) John 19: 19-27; (12) Luke 23: 39-44; (13) Luke 23: 46; (14) Mark 15: 39; (15) John 19: 31-35; (16) Luke 23: 50-53.)
(b) Ramble. (Make it a ramble to pick wild violets, or study nature.)
5. (a) Easter Monday excursion of some sort.
(b) Tidying the church garden, or helping with the gardens of old folk or invalids. (If gardening is not practicable for all, then find some alternative service to the community.)

April

1. (a) A hymn-book and Bible repair night for the

Sunday school or church. Begin paying in weekly contributions towards a summer outing or camp.

- (b) Visit to a village church, and conducted tour of it. (Most vicars welcome the chance of taking interested groups round and explaining things to them. But make your contacts and arrangements beforehand.)
- 2. (a) Dramatizing stories from famous literature. (There is plenty of scope in the Bible, Dickens, Kipling, and so on.)
- (b) Dance, or social; members bring friends. (It is bad policy to arrange a dance if many club boys do not dance. Should dancing be popular only with a section of the club then put dances in as part of a program of social games.)
- 3. (a) Talk on Temperance. (Get a competent and keen person to do this—but be pretty sure beforehand that he will 'go down well' with the young people.)
- (b) Country ramble. (There should be primroses about !)
- 4. (a) Supper and singsong. (This can be a fairly formal sort of occasion as it pretty well brings to a close the winter program.)
- (b) Evening of quizzes and charades.

May

- 1. (a) Pencil and paper games, and reading of a modern short story.
- (b) Evening ramble, with talk on Summer Program. (This program, in rough, should have already been planned. It is not so much suggestions for it that are needed from the club members, as an opportunity for leader or committee to whet appetites for what is to come.)
- 2. (a) Invitation frolic.
- (b) Outdoor campfire supper. (It is best not to depend entirely on cooking over the campfire. -

Such menu items as can be partly prepared at home, then warmed up or 'frizzled' are safest—they save much time, and maybe disappointment.)

3. (a) Whit-Monday excursion or expedition.
(b) Eisteddfod-Exhibition, or Spring Show, preparations.
4. (a) More preparations.
(b) The show.
5. (a) Invitation party in garden of some friend of the club.
(b) Outdoor rounders tournament. (Rounders is the best mixed game for outdoors, and can well become a popular feature of summer program.)

June

1. (a) Expedition or treasure hunt. (There is infinite scope for inventiveness and originality in these features. Interest is always much keener if they are on a team-competition basis.)
(b) Visit to another club. (Such a visit should preferably be to another club of similar type and size, with which you have much in common, for this makes it easier to plan return visits, and all sorts of friendly rivalries and joint activities.)
2. (a) Sports night. ('Christian Youth Standard Activities,' with the Standard Tests—Running, Jumping, Throwing, can be practised—see *Youth Club Activities*, Methuen.)
(b) Picnic, or giving help to a farmer who is hay-making. (Many farmers are glad of extra aid at certain times of the year, and it is a good plan to contact a friendly man and ask him to invite club members over when he has opportunity.)
3. (a) Rounders night.
(b) Theatre visit. (Make a point of visiting only worth-while shows. Members usually see and hear enough rubbish on film and radio.)

4. (a) Short train or bus trip, and walk back. (Five miles is enough, except with chosen group of really keen walkers.)
- (b) Summer C.Y. rally. (If no such thing is held, your club can take the initiative in starting one. A good plan may be to contact the local Sunday School Union secretary and see what help he can give—his inter-denominational organization should be most useful. The local Youth Organizer may also be of service.)

July

1. (a) Rounders, cricket, tennis. (If possible there should be some proper coaching for these two latter games—so many just 'pick things up,' and so never get good style or technique. Make members realize the need of tuition.)
- (b) Swim party. (Swimming also should involve study and work, not just fooling around at the pool. Get a good coach if possible, and adopt club tests and standards, with badges and certificates if possible.)
2. (a) Swim—plenty of fun, of course, as well as real work.
- (b) River outing. Punts for preference—these craft are safest, and each can hold four. (Teach your members to use paddles, poles, oars, correctly—and impress on them that ability does not come without effort and practice.)
3. (a) Talk on 'Safety on the Road.' (By a policeman or other competent person. The thing might well be combined with a visit to an ambulance station or hospital.)
- (b) Summer Outing, or beginning of Camp.
4. (a) Campfire supper.
- (b) Swim.
5. (a) Boating trip, or visit to bathing place some miles away.
- (b) Party in garden of some friend of the club, with lawn games on a team basis.

August

1. (a) August Bank Holiday excursion or expedition.
(b) Helping a farmer ; or a ramble, with tea out. (If many are going it is well to have arranged beforehand for the meal.)
2. (a) An evening of outdoor games. (Keep off the beaten track for these. Toss ball, tenikoit, duckstone, are examples, and many 'juvenile' games will be remembered and suggested if members be asked for ideas.)
(b) Entertaining another club.
3. (a) Outdoor athletic and games contest with some other club or youth group.
(b) Swim, with special practice of water games and stunts. (This in preparation for gala items.)
4. (a) Cycle run, or paper-chase.
(b) Picnic, with games or singsong after.
5. (a) Swimming gala preparation.
(b) Swimming gala.

September

1. (a) Talks on 'What I most enjoyed in my holiday,' or general discussion on Recruiting for the Club. (If all have not finished holidays then save this for later on.)
(b) Helping farmer with his harvest. Or picnic.
2. (a) Discussion on winter program. (This should enable the club committee to settle definitely all the plans it has had in mind.)
(b) Blackberrying excursion.
3. (a) Recruiting week, with whatever canvassing and publicity work has been previously determined.
(b) More blackberries. (This should be a community activity, not for personal gain. The fruit may be sold, or given away. Total weight should be noted, and some sort of target achieved.)
4. (a) Opening social or frolic, with invitation and welcome to new recruits and prospective members.
(An alternative is to launch the winter session

with a formal Supper, with speeches, toasts, and so on.)

- (b) A Bible quiz or contest evening; or 'Books I have read this year' symposium.

October

1. (a) Visit to cinema. (It is good to reserve seats, if possible, so that all sit together and there is real feeling that it is a club occasion.)
(b) Charade, or 'I want to be an actor,' night.
2. (a) Book repair night. (Library volumes, hymn-books, song books, etc.)
(b) Tongue twisters and quizzes. (This is best arranged for teams, or girls can compete against boys.)
3. (a) Social, with dancing.
(b) Travel or missionary talk. (Have maps and 'exhibits' if practicable—they add so much to interest.)
4. (a) Brains trust, with distinguished 'guest.'
(b) Country dance party. (It is best to have a real expert to conduct this—most day-schools have at least one such person on the staff. Be sure to get some American square dances if possible, and don't forget the old Roger de Coverley.)
5. (a) Temperance talk. Entertainment rehearsals. (Every sort of item should be able to fit into the autumn or winter entertainment program. See that every member finds a place somewhere.)
(b) Rehearsals.

November

1. (a) Club bonfire and fireworks on November 5th.
(b) Rehearsals.
2. (a) Entertainment.
(b) Entertainment. (After so much preparation it is always worth-while to make it a two-night affair.)
3. (a) Talk on 'Stars,' and first study of them in open air. (If a real expert cannot be found to do this

the whole club can do preliminary study indoors with star map and blackboard, then go out and find the various constellations.)

- (b) Informal supper, followed by progressive games.
- 4. (a) Star study. Making Christmas presents, calendars, cards, and so on.
- (b) Invitation frolic.

December

- 1. (a) Campfire singsong, and yarns. (Indoor, of course.)
- (b) Making things for Christmas. More star study.
- 2. (a) Cinema visit.
- (b) Debate or discussion.
- 3. (a) Carol party. (The large orphanages, like the National Children's Home, are glad to supply carol books and collecting boxes to parties sending their collections for the work. Causes like this—hospitals, Relief and Distress Funds, make the most appeal at this time of the year. But singing should be good. Accordions and harmonicas make good accompaniments, though violins and double bass are best.)
- (b) Carol party.
- 4. (a) Christmas party.
- (b) Talks on 'What I liked most at the club this year.'
- 5. (a) Pencil and paper games ; singsong.
- (b) Charades. Year end service.

A final word on programs. Don't try to attract and cater for your young people on every night of the week. Remember that most of them have good homes and an obligation to them and to parents. You do ill-service if you weaken home ties.

CHAPTER 11

TOPICS

FOR fireside chats, for discussions, for debates, the right sort of topics are always in demand. Here are a wide variety, in two broad divisions, *General* and *Religious*. To adapt a topic for a debate it is only necessary to adjust its form. For instance : *Shall I bet ?* can be debated under the resolution *That betting is harmful*.

General

What improvements in our town I would most like to see.

What is the right amount of pocket money for girls and boys ?

Shall I bet ?

Should advertising be abolished ?

Can warts be spirited away by moonlight ?

Do the radio and cinemas do more harm than good ?

Should the power of local authorities be reduced ?

What curious old customs belonged to this district ?

When a person stands on his head the blood rushes to his head ; why, when he stands on his feet, does it not rush to his feet ?

Ought all inheritance to be abolished ?

Should party government be abolished and a coalition formed ?

Should people be free to do what they like in their leisure time ?

Are the girls of today too frivolous ?

Is suicide ever permissible ?

Ghosts—are there such things ?

Ought there to be public houses ?

Should cinema visits be rationed or restricted ?

What are dreams ?

What are the most interesting things in London ?

Should men and women have equal pay for equal work ?

- Ought Englishmen to study languages more ?
- Is sex teaching overdone ?
- Should the fact that a person is dying be concealed from him or her by doctors and relatives ?
- Are we at liberty to do what we like with our own money ?
- Should boys be compelled to go into coalmines ?
- Are clothes and appearance really important ?
- What is the best way to deal with fear in oneself ?
- Is spelling reform needed ?
- Should all citizens be compelled to vote at elections ?
- Ought we to have a world state at once ?
- Should girls wear slacks ?
- Can and should everyone find pleasure in work ?
- Should children be brought up to believe in Father Christmas ?
- Does Britain think too much of sport ?
- Will it ever be possible to reach the moon ?
- Is a man ever entitled to steal a loaf of bread, or anything else ?
- What is swearing ; how did it begin ?
- Smutty stories—should one ever pretend to enjoy them ?
- Which has the greatest influence on a person's life and character—education, heredity, environment ?
- What would you do if you had but one year to live ?
- Should English or Esperanto be enforced as a world language ?
- Were the 'good old days' any better than present times ?
- Is snoring a complaint, and is there any remedy for it ?
- What six books would you take to a desert island ?
- Are co-educational schools and clubs best ?
- Is it true that wars always have been and always will be ?
- How does a fly land on a ceiling ?
- If three men could be imposed on the world as supreme rulers which three would you choose ?
- Has the Soviet system any advantage over the English way of life ?

Was the Nuremberg trial a blunder ?

Is ' pot-hunting ' harmful to sport ?

If boys had a course of domestic science at school, as girls do, would it lessen the number of unhappy marriages ?

What period would I choose if I could live through one week of any past age ?

Are men as much the slaves of fashion as women ?

Is buying one's amusement as good as providing it for oneself ?

Should women with children go out to work ?

What would I do if I had to die in one hour's time ?

Are there any parts of our town which ought to be preserved ?

Should we all be healthier as vegetarians ?

Is homework a good thing ?

Were I allowed to meet any three men from the world's history which three would I choose ?

Should divorce be made easier ?

Does the Press depend too much on ' sensations ' ?

Do housewives today depend too much on the tin-opener ?

Will poverty always exist ?

Should the voluntary hospital system be retained ?

If you had to relinquish three senses, which would you give up ?

Is the belief in lucky numbers and lucky days just superstition ?

Which is better, private enterprise or State control ?

Are the sailors of today as skilled as those of old sailing-ship days ?

If I could see, by television for five minutes, anything in the world's history, what would I choose ?

Should euthanasia—gentle and easy death—be permitted ?

Who are my three greatest heroes ?

What would I pack in a suitcase for an indefinite stay on a desert island ?

- Is cremation desirable ?
- What meal would I choose, if I could have whatever I liked ?
- What books have most influenced me ?
- Do men look more manly when they wear beards ?
- How should magistrates be chosen ?
- What is the difference between work and play ?
- Are there any occupations which are harmful to the community ?
- Are clothes more sensible than in former ages ?
- Who are the six greatest living men or women ?
- Are war memorials of any use ?
- Who should control Australia ?
- Why is it conventional to use black print on white paper ?
- Is some unemployment inevitable ?
- Is beauty a greater asset to a girl than brains ?
- Ought fox-hunting and similar sports to be abolished ?
- Do you really believe the earth to be round, or do you just accept it without reason ?
- What films this year have been really worth seeing ?
- Is modern music good ?
- Ought passports and visas to be abolished ?
- Is royalty worth maintaining ?
- Which is more benefit to the community, the optimist or the pessimist ?
- What invention or discovery has had the greatest influence on mankind ?
- Should white and black people be treated as equals ?
- Is a person usually wiser at forty years of age than at twenty ?
- Are school examinations good ?
- Who can best bring up children—parents or child experts ?
- Is it right, sometimes, to bluff parents ?
- Are there, or should there be, such things as Upper, Middle, and Lower classes ?
- At what age is a person too old for useful life ?

Has the internal combustion engine caused more happiness or unhappiness ?

Is there anything at all for which we should be prepared to die ?

Is modern art just nonsense ?

Should black people control Africa ?

Why is every line of print read from left to right ; would it not be better to have alternate lines reading from right to left ?

Is the countryside being destroyed ?

Do the benefits of daylight saving outweigh the disadvantages ?

What makes a good film ?

What was the most exciting experience you ever had ?

Is card playing a good thing ?

What was the funniest experience you ever had ?

What was the biggest surprise you ever had ?

Is hire-purchase a good thing ?

. Can and does the Press shape public opinion ?

. Do people get enough fresh air ?

. Are girls more careless with money than boys ?

Is a man ever justified in having a conscientious objection to obeying his country's laws ?

What is education ?

Could the general methods of furnishing and decorating a house be improved ?

Do we often see ourselves as others see us ?

. Are majorities ever right ?

Are the young people of today superior or inferior in any ways to their predecessors ?

Are chain stores good or bad ?

Do girls adorn themselves for their own pleasure or to attract the opposite sex ?

Do many people steal from their employers ?

Is mankind capable of arranging world affairs so as to ensure lasting peace ?

What things make most for happiness ?

What is a gentleman ?

- Which daily newspaper is the best ?
- Ought colonies to be allowed ?
- What good things in life are there which cost nothing ?
- What are the causes of juvenile delinquency ?
- Is chivalry gone ?
- What is laughter ?
- Is it good to give tips ?
- What makes a nation great ?
- Should strikes be permitted ?
- Why are there no blue foods ?
- Is insurance a good thing ?
- Is a person in love in a normal state of mind ?
- Should marriages be arranged by parents ?
- What is the function of prisons ?
- Is ambition a good thing ?
- Should there be professionals in sport ?
- Is a doctor, or anyone else, ever justified in telling a lie ?
- Why is it that people living under similar conditions, as members of the same family, are often quite different in character, manner, disposition ?
- Can pain ever be a good thing ?
- ' Absence makes the heart grow fonder,' ' Out of sight out of mind '—are these proverbs contradictory, and, if so, which is correct ?
- Should everyone do some daily keep-fit exercises ?
- Are English girls bad cooks ?
- Are there any conventions we should resist ?
- If you were a good fairy what three gifts would you bestow upon a new-born child ?
- Should there be State lotteries ?
- What is the wealth of a nation ?
- Should blasphemy still be reckoned a crime ?
- Is it a moral weakness to be unable to get up in the morning ?
- Has the conquest of the air benefited mankind ?
- In what ways can the physically handicapped share in sport ?

- Should there be party politics in local government ?
- What people of this century, if any, will be remembered in a thousand years' time ?
- Should books and plays be censored ?
- What chief differences to mankind has the splitting of the atom meant ?
- Should there be juries ?
- What can be done to improve traffic conditions locally ?
- Would a Channel Tunnel be an advantage ?
- Should football pools be abolished ?
- Is propaganda ever justified ?
- Is the chewing habit, as practised by cows and gum addicts, beneficial ?
- Can one be always quite honest ?
- Is there one law for the rich and another for the poor ?
- What is the most needed invention today ?
- Is greyhound racing a sport ?
- Does the world progress ?
- Should smoking be banned in cinemas and theatres ?
- What things make people laugh ?
- Should national anthems be abolished ?
- Should capital punishment be done away with ?
- Is our town in any ways inferior to others of the same size ?
- Should children have more freedom, or more discipline ?
- Is winter really a healthy time ?
- Should there be a tax on bachelors ?
- Are the male sex vain ?
- Can dictatorship ever be good ?
- Can dread of disease or illness ever cause a person to develop that illness ?
- Has Britain seen its greatest days ?
- Does telepathy exist ?
- Does the present education system tend to separate the clerk from the carpenter ?
- Would you have preferred to live in any other century ?
- Should one vote for a party or for individual candidates ? •

Religious

What proofs, if any, are there of the Resurrection ?

What is a Christian ?

Why should I go to church ?

What are religious revivals ; are they ever likely to happen again ?

- Do heaven and hell really exist ?

How do I know if there is a God ?

Are any books in the Bible a hindrance to religion ?

Are the Bible accounts of Jesus true ?

Is Communism a religion ?

Should children be taught religion ?

Is it wrong to lose one's temper ?

Did the New Testament miracles really happen ?

In what ways was Jesus completely original ?

Has God a plan for the world, and is it working out ?

Is religious conversion necessary ?

Should parsons be conscripted for military service ?

Did Jesus make jokes ?

What is inspiration, where does it come from ?

Has Christianity ever been fairly tried ?

Is there any future for the churches ?

Was Jesus just a man ?

Should there be women preachers ?

Did the two world wars damage religion ?

Is Christianity just one of many religions ?

Did Jesus approve the use of force ?

How can Christianity save the world—or can it ?

Should I worship ?

- Has an animal a soul ?

Is the Sermon on the Mount practicable ?

Should a club always have epilogues ?

- Is the account of the virgin birth true ?

Could church services be improved ?

Can a rich man be Christian ?

- Is there a devil ?

Does God answer prayer ?

- Should religion be mixed with politics ?

- Has God spoken and does He still speak to men ?
- Why different denominations ?
- How can God listen to everyone's prayers at once ?
- Is there a future life ?
- Should Sunday games be allowed ?
- Are religious experiences just auto-suggestion ?
- Could a man dropping bombs be a Christian ?
- Is the Trinity something real ?
- Is there any Christianity outside the churches ?
- Was God ever the God of war, as in the Old Testament ?
- Is it just silly to say ' Who made God ? '
- Have all great religions come from the East ?
- Must the Christian fight Communism ?
- Is the Bible ' inspired '—what does that mean ?
- How should a Christian nation settle quarrels ?
- Are foreign missions good ?
- What is meant by the ' second coming ' ?
- Is Jesus alive now ?
- Are God and Jesus different ?
- Can God be good if He allows the innocent to suffer ?
- Can a Christian be a spiritualist or a Christian Scientist ?
- Do our sins need forgiving ?
- Shall we know each other after death ?
- Should there be a civil alternative to military conscription ?

CHAPTER 12

CLUB ENTERTAINMENTS

THERE is no more serviceable club activity than putting on entertainments. A good plan is to make at least two of them high-spots of the year—a concert-entertainment in early winter, and an eisteddfod-exhibition in the spring. Drama festivals can be additional in those clubs which get a liking for plays.

The winter entertainment fits well in November or early December, for then preparations can begin at the commencement of the autumn session when the club gets a new burst of life after summer holidays. Every member should be able to take some active part, for not only are entertainers needed for the variety program, but there will be printing and distribution of programs and tickets, and, of course, publicity posters; planning of stage and making of equipment and costumes; lighting, stewarding, effects production, and so on. The artistes themselves should be as varied as possible—singing, miming, acting, reciting, stunting, conjuring, performing in all manner of ways. Brisk production, with plenty of laughs and bright compering, have much to do with a first-class show—and endless rehearsing is necessary. Don't have prices too low, and make yourself conversant with the requirements of entertainment tax and performing rights fees.

The eisteddfod-exhibition, similarly gives scope for every type of talent, and is admirable publicity for a club—bringing along crowds of interested friends and relatives as well as the general public.

For the eisteddfod there can be open and closed classes for varying ages, in singing, reciting, reading at sight, instrumental playing, choir singing. For the exhibition, classes in woodwork, needlecraft, model and toy making, hand-writing, painting and drawing, and suchlike. Ages groups may be : under 14; 14 to 16; over 16. The exhibition entries should have been received in good time so that they

can be effectively displayed, with judges' awards and comments, on the afternoon or early evening of the big day. The preliminary heats for the eisteddfod—if any are required—should also be worked off beforehand, and the eisteddfod proper can then be held immediately after the exhibition. The adjudicators will make their comments and judgments after the various groups of entries. Good organization is needed to ensure that the program does not drag, and variety, so that it does not become dull. Much depends too on the ability and cheerful bearing of the judges—who should be chosen with greatest care.

Many districts nowadays have drama leagues and festivals in which youth clubs can compete in staging one-act plays. These are excellent introductions for putting on full-length plays. Play reading serves as a good method of getting young folk interested in plays at the outset. From that can follow short sketches at the annual entertainment; then a more serious one-act play of real quality, and finally the still bigger production the preparation for which may occupy a keen group for best part of a year.

An even more ambitious venture is the staging of a light opera or musical comedy. Musical as well as dramatic ability is called for. It may be that the club possesses some instrumental talent and so can have an orchestra to form the basis of such ventures. Choirs and orchestras are ambitious ideas, but quite within the range of possible activities.

But the most promising musical venture for the average youth club is the harmonica band. The harmonica appeals to the most robust boy, and to girls equally; reasonable ability is very quickly gained by the learner, though one can go on improving technique for years; the best instruments are quite inexpensive. Ordinary four-part harmony can be played by the appropriate instruments, and the reading of music for beginners is helped by numbers printed above the notes which correspond to numbers on the harmonicas. A group of boys and girls in a club may begin to play light-heartedly in a rollicking singsong—but before long, as likely as not, they will be settling to serious music study and.

tackling popular classics. Once formed, and efficient, it is easy for the band to play on every kind of indoor and outdoor occasion. Even the boy with no musical ear cannot play out of tune—as he always does and will on the violin—the inevitability of accurate intonation and right harmony is the most helpful factor in ear training. That is one reason why the harmonica can be taught so successfully to a group.

All the best harmonicas come from Germany, where in Trossingen, a tradition of quality has been established comparable with that of north Italy for violins. Once a balanced set of *tremolos*, *altos*, *organs* and *vinetas* has been procured a band can really get to work. A fine help is an accordion, which has precisely the same reed tone and can fill in so much of volume and parts. Then a set of drums is a big asset, and a piano of right pitch. Finally, if it can be managed, a string double bass.

A harmonica band, like a string combination, can well become the nucleus of a concert party, giving regular shows at towns and villages within comfortable reach, and adding much to the prestige and fun of the home club.

CHAPTER 13

SELF-TRAINING AND TRAINING OTHERS

THE basis of successful club leadership is understanding friendliness. Other and technical qualifications are useful, but they are not fundamental. The day-school teacher may get away with mere educational qualifications—an extensive knowledge in a few special subjects and an acquaintance with teaching technique. But that would not carry a youth leader far. The important distinction is that while boys or girls must, without option, attend day school, and however much they dislike a teacher they must still sit in his classes—there is no such compulsion at the club. You find the leader unpleasant—you leave the club.

So then the first thing to be learned if one would be not unsuccessful in club leadership is how to become friendly with members. There is no special technique in this ; one might almost say it cannot be learned. Friendship does not come by conscious effort, but at the same time one can be on guard against things which prevent or impair friendship. It is only a part truth that some people are born with a natural knack for making friends, while others have not the capacity.

Adolescents are eager for understanding friendship, but very sensitive, impulsive, and liable to take offence. Therefore you can be particularly careful not to hurt their feelings or affront their self-respect. One single outbreak of impatience or bad temper, and irreparable damage may be done. Those young folk will often be disappointing, tantalizing, infuriating, but you must keep a hold on yourself, and say much less than you may feel. They will break promises, forget appointments, let you down in all sorts of ways—you must check your aggravation and carry on. They will talk to you with complete lack of courtesy and respect, seeming to value your opinions no more than those of their companions—you must pocket your pride, and realize that age

in itself does not necessarily entitle one to deference. They will be clamorous for a trivial program of fun and dance and will resist strongly efforts to put worth-while things across—you must persevere good-humouredly. They will be fickle and disloyal, maybe unfair and mean and selfish—you must not allow yourself to be irritated.

In all such ways as those lies the foundation training of the leader. It is all self-discipline, and understanding of the emotional unsettlement of adolescence. You must school yourself to see the good qualities and potentialities that lie behind the seeming bad ones. They are always there if you will develop the discerning eye.

Thus this first part of self-training can only be achieved in the club itself, by close contact with the young people and growing intimacy with them. From such intimacy will come patience, even temper, an ability to avoid ever being rattled.

Then you should aim at having some interests in common with the club members. You may have a passion for Shakespeare and symphony concerts—both of which bore them stiff; and they an obsession with football and films—neither of which has any appeal for you. But as the young folk won't come to you, at least not at first, you must strive to go to them. Try to make yourself knowledgeable and keen on their interests, and you will be well repaid.

But general and technical training is needed too. The club leader should certainly have a sound knowledge of youth club organization and method. The structure of the club is become in some degree standardized, just as is the day school or Sunday school. Organization and program planning can be studied by textbooks, and in the sort of training courses available today in universities, colleges, and through education authorities and religious bodies. There are, besides the long residential courses, summer schools, Easter schools, weekend courses, special weeks, evening lectures, and a wide range of most varied facilities by which you may equip yourselves before tackling club work, and improve your ability when once you have begun.

One other thing. It is a great advantage if you have some special and highly trained skill which can be the basis of a club activity or which enables you to take a strong lead in some popular feature of club life. If you are a footballer, a swimmer, a chessplayer, a pianist, an embroidery expert, you will soon be listened to with respect in that particular field—and the effects will be noticeable in every other part of club life also. So make this specialist ability one of the goals of your self-training.

You will find that with some few of the club, either helpers or members, you will become particularly intimate. Encourage mutual frankness and honesty, so that they can tell you your faults and criticize your actions in all friendliness. Sympathetic criticism can be of immense help as you strive to equip yourself for the better running of the club.

It has already been said that the measure of success achieved in a club is the degree in which self-government is practised. It may also be said that the quality of the leader is similarly indicated by the amount of efficiency he helps others to attain. No person in a club should be indispensable. There should be understudies and deputies adequate to carry on in all circumstances. That means that suitable and promising members should be helped to get experience and ability. Train others, as well as yourself.

The dividing of club members into teams or houses is a most useful way of delegating authority. Team leaders and assistants, or seconds, or whatever you choose to call them, can have all the essential experience, in miniature, of club leadership. The ability to take the initiative, to act democratically, to placate offended ones, to encourage the diffident, to reprove the slack—and yet to preserve friendly harmony and strong unity—all that is implicit in leading even the smallest group. Make your young leaders realize all that is involved in their responsible posts and how much study and effort is required.

Lend them books which you have used yourself, introduce them step by step into the art of leadership and let them face its problems as they arise in the life of your club,

discussing with you the steps which you take in dealing with them.

But let these young potential leaders have plenty opportunity to see other clubs and to get more varied knowledge than your own club can give. To see how other folk do things, and how clubs larger and smaller than your own tackle their own problems is always a useful thing. It is good both to be made satisfied and dissatisfied with one's own achievements. Something can be learned as well from the extremely inefficient club as well as from the plainly successful one.

Don't spoon-feed your young leaders too much. Give them real burdens to carry, and their backs will grow stronger. But let them feel the companionship of others who are also carrying loads. That is why it is so helpful to have a number taking responsibility and to give them frequent opportunity of discussing progress and problems. Let them also meet folk in training courses and conferences as well as in the home club. Pack them off to brief study courses as often as you can, for this brings them into the way of thinking of themselves as students in training for fuller obligations as their ability increases.

Get them, whenever possible, to big rallies and local and national functions which inspire by giving a wider vision of what club, particularly Christian Youth club, life stands for. Such inspiration and idealism as may be kindled at some spectacular, inspiring occasion, can keep one going through long stretches of tedious and discouraging labour.

Generally it is the oldest club members who will be taking responsibility and developing leadership ability. But age must not be the sole criterion, or even the principal one. The necessary promise of ability may be clear in younger ones—and, once it has shown unmistakably, take care to foster it in all the ways you can.

One thing is certain. There can never be, within the foreseeable future, too many club folk trained to take responsibility and to act as leaders in the various spheres of youth activity.

THE MEMBER AS AN INDIVIDUAL

MANY thoughtful people see something of menace in the Service of Youth movement. It can so easily be used for political ends. Young people can be regimented into obedient masses, in readiness for the time when military conscription takes them over for training in the art of killing and making war. It was the efficient youth movements of Germany and Italy, planned and controlled by unscrupulous scoundrels—aided by many well-intentioned but short-sighted people—that brought Europe to disaster in the second world war.

Everyone who knows the youth of today is aware of how originality and sturdy independence are sapped by the opiates of the cinema, the big-circulation popular press, and the cheaper radio programs. Young people think, behave, talk, react, alike to a degree previously unknown in the world's history. Bureaucracy increases—youth is controlled, directed, advised, as never before. Education is mass-produced; all take the same subjects, the same exams, taught in the same large classes in buildings and with equipment becoming increasingly standardized.

Shall the club add to this standardization, or resist it? More and more club leaders are being trained, and the tendency is to have fewer and larger clubs and youth centres, operated by professional people, with some voluntary aid. It is around here that danger seems most to loom. Given a large, well-equipped centre—attractive enough to keep young folk there for most of their leisure; a ruthless organizer; a sub-Christian or pagan atmosphere; such swollen membership that it can only be considered *en masse*—and you have all that is needed for the complete demoralization of young people and their speedy transmutation into dull robots, instead of 'sons of God . . . a little lower than the angels . . . crowned with glory and honour.'

It has been maintained throughout this book that Christian Youth work, and club work in which religion has prime place, is the only sort worth doing—the only sort, in fact, which is not harmful to youth and menacing to the community.

Christianity, in opposition to Communism, stands signally for the supreme worth of the individual, and the C.Y. club stands for it too. The greatest leader is not the one who controls biggest numbers but the one who has deepest influence. It cannot be repeated too often that the greatest youth leader of all time, settling his technique for 'overcoming the world,' chose only twelve young men. He lived with them twenty-four hours a day for three years. Even from these twelve he selected three for special intimacy. And at the end of all his labour one of the twelve was a complete failure. Yet one meets youth leaders today who talk of their hundreds, and think that to tackle a mere fifty in the two or three hours available weekly is just bagatelle.

That is all wrong. The finest work among youth is done in the small groups. It is the personal influence of a devoted leader on just a few intimate ones that achieves worth-while results. At the risk of being misquoted and misunderstood it is worth saying that it is better to achieve something for a few than nothing for a lot. And big clubs, like big-business, deal with a lot of folk.

That is not to say that the big club is bad. It can be good if its members are treated as individuals—though it is hard for the large club to function well in this respect.

While it is often necessary therefore that you shall think of your club people as 'the members' it is important that you think of them much more often as single folk, all of them quite separate and different. That means that there is urgent need for you to know them individually.

You may be helped by a painstaking card index scheme of tabulating name, nickname, age, home, work, parents, interests, and so on. That will give you an introductory knowledge when you seek to make the acquaintance of your member. The more one knows about an individual the more understanding and sympathy can develop, for one has

a clue to character and can make allowances and give understanding.

Boys and girls between the ages of fourteen and eighteen are yearning for confidants who are sympathetic. It so often, unfortunately, happens that relationships at home become strained and the youngster feels unappreciated and misunderstood. A trustworthy, older friend who is willing to share problems and troubles and give guidance is most welcome. The club leader can become a sort of father confessor—but sharing bright days as well as cloudy.

At the outset, learn the right name for a boy or girl—it may or may not be the baptismal appellation. Then the school or work background. This looms largest in the life of the adolescent and it is essential that you shall be familiar with it. Incidentally there may occasionally be opportunities when you can mediate or make representations to 'those in authority' as an interested friend. But remember that confidences between friends are 'exchanged'—you cannot hope to be on the right footing with a club member unless you trust him as much as he trusts you. The fact that you are adult, or official club leader, or a person of social consequence, just has no bearing on the matter. Status in the club has to be earned, by leader and member alike. And it does not come by deliberate intention but by quality of character and sincerity of motive.

It is during the free time and the canteen interlude that the club leader has best opportunity of getting to know individuals. Then is the chance to sit down and chat, or lounge gossiping. Then is the time when young friends will cluster round to tell you what is on their mind. It follows that the club leader must particularly be present during these periods—it is a complete misunderstanding to think that as nothing is being organized there is no need for the leader to appear.

Because of the importance of the individual, and the necessity for developing free choice, compulsion should be used as little as possible. The big, successful activity, which flourishes merely because members are compelled to

participate, or else forfeit the membership, may be really worth doing and of distinct physical, mental, or disciplinary value, to those taking part—but it does not on that account strengthen the all-important quality of independence and robust personality. It may be good to retain it, but the usefulness of the club cannot be assessed by it alone. The ideal to be aimed at is the club of vigorous individuals who have a strong sense of communal loyalty and obligation and who find joy in strengthening the hands of each other in gladly accepted common service.

Don't despise the small group activities. They may be some of the most valuable, for they will be meeting the real needs of the few who share in them. There may be only three in the club interested in painting, but if those three can be aided in study and given opportunity of serving in some way then both they and the club are being genuinely helped. *Such individual consideration of activities may, on the face of it, involve far more planning and trouble than a few big-group things, but actually there may be less trouble involved, for real enthusiasm on the part of participants will ensure success and continuity even though little of tuition can be procured.* Books, a friendly amateur, an occasional visit of a really skilled person, correspondence courses—in such ways the tiny group may be aided and kept going.

Finally, take care that the club remains a democracy. Every member must have the right to be heard in all the affairs in which he is concerned. There must be fair elections, and no undue hanging on to office. Open parliaments, or inquiries, or general meetings, must have their place in the club program, so that rank and file members may air their views and bring out their grievances with hope of redress. Only so will they feel justified in their belief—so badly battered in everyday life—that each of them counts for something, and that liberty, equality, fraternity are real. The Christian Youth club almost automatically brings this out in its every epilogue or act of worship, with its acknowledgment of one God, Father of us all.

CHAPTER 15

DISCIPLINE

THE tiny, trifling, leader-ridden, inefficient club may never have trouble over behaviour and discipline. That is not to its credit—one does not compliment the dead or dying on not being boisterous.

In the alive, healthy club disciplinary troubles are inevitable. Make no mistake about that. Don't believe the person who says he or she has or knows a club where such things are unknown. Of course they occur much more frequently during the growing, formative years of a club before tradition imposes good behaviour as the 'done thing.' But even then, if the club functions properly, there are always new members coming in who, before they become properly settled, are occasionally sources of disturbance. What to do with the troublesome boy or girl is of first importance, and no-one should tackle club leadership without having a general and sound idea of the sort of principles to be applied.

Some club leaders have the sort of personality which makes them 'good disciplinarians.' That most often means that young people are intimidated by them; less frequently and more helpfully it implies that they instinctively do the right things. To discover what are those right things should be the business of every would-be leader.

Before considering this point, let us clear the other type of disciplinarian out of the way.

It is comparatively easy to control, or seem to control, young people by making them feel fear of the consequences of wrong-doing. Everyone who is conscripted into the armed forces learns that sort of discipline. The sergeant-major, the C.O. the court martial—they loom always menacingly in the background. To be a sergeant-major in the club is a sure way of keeping things quiet, but there is no moral value attached to good behaviour, achieved in such fashion—and the function of youth clubs is to train and

equip young people for better quality living. To make them intimidated and subservient is to do exactly the opposite. The curse of military conscription is deadly enough in standardizing young folk and bruising the finer traits of nature and damping or extinguishing the bright young flames of individuality—without youth clubs aiding in the fell work.

As has been so often said in these pages, if there is no compulsion to attend a club, then the disgruntled member can just leave. And if someone goes out every time there is disagreement then a club cannot last long. But this freedom is absolutely inseparable from the whole character of the worth-while club—there is no Attendance Officer examining registers, with a police court somewhere behind him. Compulsory education to the age of eighteen may one day come in England, as it has in other lands, but even when it does it still will not interfere with the true function of the youth club, which is to train character, rather than to impart ability or knowledge. This means that discipline can only come from within, not from without. The truest discipline is self-discipline. Club members must behave because they want to, not because they are made to.

The club leader has the task of training his members to choose good behaviour for its own sake. That does not mean that they are under no control, doing just as they like in the club, or that the leader exercises no restraint. A leader who attempts no restraint because he is timid or weak soon finds things get completely out of hand; the leader who is firm and strong, and yet is restrained, is the one who gains respect and whose wishes are regarded.

First there must be club rules or standards, clearly defined; then the club leader must be such a person as will see that these rules are observed. That is not enforcing discipline, it is insisting on self-discipline. Every member of the club, by his coming into membership, has agreed to a certain code. He must observe that code, and the leader must co-operate with him in seeing that he does. Supposing non-smoking is a rule—then no-one can remain a member

who persists in smoking on club premises. That principle is so obvious that it is frequently ignored. If club constitution is consistently flouted by a particular individual then he clearly does not desire to remain a member of the club which so limits his freedom. If attendance at a special class or group activity is obligatory, then one who does not attend automatically shows himself unsuitable for membership.

On such grounds as those the club leader must be adamant. Any slackness will rightly be interpreted as weakness and lack of concern for club principles. Yet if you simply take your stand on such grounds and rigidly enforce these standards you will probably empty your club as thoroughly and as quickly as the mere, unimaginative martinet.

True discipline does not depend on a code of don'ts, but of do's. It was Jesus himself who transmuted the negations of the decalogue into the affirmations which brought joyful eagerness to obey. The club should have so many do's that don'ts can hardly find a place. Remember that every time a member is expelled, the club, in respect of that member, has failed completely. Yet expulsions are sometimes unavoidable. Every club leader of much experience has come up against the dilemma of having to sacrifice one member for the sake of the club. Hard as it seems, it occasionally has to be done. If one or two folk behave in such fashion that the club is deteriorating, heading for catastrophe, utterly failing to get on with its program, then those one or two must go for the sake of the others.

Expulsion is a dire, last step. Before it happens every other thing must be tried. When misbehaviour occurs, the leader's first job is to find who really is the cause, and why it has happened. As often as not idleness is the root of it—Satan and idle hands! If club members have nothing to do they will find things, usually the wrong things. Keep all engaged and interested and trouble will be minimized. But after misdemeanour there should always be personal dealing with the culprit. Open rebuke is not generally the best way.

Much more can be achieved by the quiet personal approach. A friendly chat, perhaps at the canteen, may uncover some unsuspected motive. The sort of personal dealing with the individual referred to in the last chapter is more than ever desirable when there has been delinquency. Sympathize rather than blame, and probe to the root of things. The public rebuke generally arouses strong resentment; the private talk mollifies and adjusts, without affronting dignity—and dignity to the adolescent is a precious thing.

It is not enough just to find the full story of some row or squabble in the club and to decide that a particular person is the chief culprit. You should also find why he so acted. Talk with him may reveal something, but to know fully you must have a knowledge of his home life, working conditions, and whole environment. Know him—that is the thing. The boy repressed at home, asserts himself when away from home; the boy who is never believed becomes almost unable to tell the truth; the girl made by home conditions to feel inferior and impoverished may steal to get her compensation. For the club leader to know all helps so much towards forgiving all, and that way may come reclamation more surely than by cold censure. Don't overlook too the possibility that club rules or conventions themselves may be faulty and in need of adjustment.

But discipline has, besides, its more familiar significance in the club, and organization of members into houses or teams can help this. Others than the leader himself, or herself, then share in maintaining order. The Members Committee, as well as house captains and team leaders, all have a responsibility, and as they deal with smaller numbers than the membership of the whole club they can exert greater influence on individuals. To stand well with one's fellows is a strong incentive with young people, and the group loyalty and prestige helps much in preserving good behaviour. Thus the members themselves are an effective force in keeping order once they have become conscious of their influence, and with most minor troubles they can be trusted to deal, through their committee and group organiza-

tion.* But occasionally things are beyond their powers, someone needs much firmer handling than they can achieve, or someone may even be transgressing having won their acquiescence, or intimidated them unduly. A 'rough house' may develop unexpectedly into a riot, and the leader has then to act promptly. His greatest asset will be his own calm. To get flustered and panicky is disastrous. Hasty words and threats should be withheld. It is better to say too little than too much. A steady voice and incisive manner, with an assurance of authority are far more effective than blustering rage. Expect the culprits to listen and obey, and they probably will. Tell them that they will hear from you in due course, and the suspended judgment will be far more potent than some hastily conceived penalty, especially as it will give you opportunity to weigh the whole matter at leisure. When tempers are allayed a quiet talk can often achieve a change. In nearly everyone is that spark of goodness which will respond to generous kindness and trust.

Occasionally penalties must be imposed on club offenders. The most usual and effective form is suspension of membership. Just a week or two of this is generally enough—there is a danger of losing the person if too long a break occurs. Such a penalty once inflicted should be rigorously observed. The club leader must be a person of his word. Other club helpers should not impose such penalties without the knowledge of the leader, and disciplinary action should at all times be a matter for the whole club staff.

It would seem hardly necessary to say that a club leader should never resort to personal violence with a member. It may sound well in theory for a leader to take a 'tough' boy by the scruff of his neck and eject him from the club, and in one case in a thousand it might not do harm, but in all the others it would lower the leader's prestige and evoke bitter reactions. To overcome by moral strength is infinitely better than by physical violence.

CHAPTER 16

THE LINKED CLUB

THE youth club is not part of the normal education system of the nation in the same way that day school, college, university, evening institute, are. These latter, State supported, with full-time paid workers who are trained educationalists, exist to develop the abilities of their students and to give all sorts of vocational training. But the clever man is not necessarily the good man ; the skilled worker may not be the trusted worker, the talented citizen is not invariably the ideal citizen. A third and moral quality comes into the matter—and this is not a guaranteed product of the gymnasium, classroom, workshop.

The church—feeble, faulty, even false, as it often is—has much more to do with this moral side of training. It is on the truly religious man, much more than on the mere scientist, that the happiness and fate of the world depend. Thus the youth club has more affinity to the modern Sunday school than to the day school. Sunday school and youth club have the opportunity of making truly religious people ; they are concerned with the production of character rather than of skill. Their workers are in the main voluntary, though not because of that necessarily untrained ; they are men and women with strong vocational sense and a deep concern for their young people. That is not to say, of course, that other educationalists may not have this same sense of moral responsibility.

The pagan youth club is mongrel and anomalous—it is not educating in the sense that the day school does, it is not character-building in the way of the true club. The true club must be religious.

If the club, the Christian Youth club is to be strong, it cannot stand alone. There must be something before it and something after it. It is absurd for a club to be groping round to collect members from everywhere ; retaining them for a few years, then turning them out into nowhere. The

country's educational system does not function in that futile way. Its section for adolescents, the secondary school, is fed from the primary schools, and passes its students on into the colleges and universities and into the working world.

So the club must find its place in a comparable system. It may be complementary to the educational system, but it is no part of it. Its truest sphere is the religious, and the analogous before and after parts are the junior club and the senior club. These latter are most customarily found, in healthy state, pursuing their right courses inside the efficient Sunday school of a genuinely Christian church—the fact that not every Sunday school is efficient nor every church really Christian does not alter this.

With the club thus happily fitted midway between childhood and adult life, continuing the moral training and religious awakening of childhood and passing on virile Christian personalities into adult 'active service'—in all that there is continuity and meaning. The Sunday school through its junior clubs provides the steady stream of new members; the old members do not just drift away but are accepted into the fellowship of those who are striving under the leadership of a living Christ, to bring salvation to a lost world.

The youth club can be joined with all sorts of national and local organizations to further its technical efficiency, to gain facilities for its activities, to obtain aids and grants of every sort. It should have its liaison with educational authorities and State bodies. But it should remain free. Its more important and deeper links will be with those people and associations which have the same fundamental aims. A dead church or an apostate one can be of no help; but an alive one will greatly benefit, and be benefited by, the Christian Youth club. So the club links there should be many and strong. There should be co-operation with every church branch and frequent personal contacts of members; club programs should fit into the whole wide range of activities, and every sort of interchange which can build up friendship and understanding should be encouraged.

But there is no obligation for a C.Y. club to join with a sub-Christian church. There is no obligation on youth to attend services conducted by the middle-aged for the elderly—unless the obligation to join with youth in their own worship is similarly recognized by the old people. If there is to be communal worship it must be shared, and conducted, equally by those of all ages, so that all can express themselves naturally in their own forms and manners.

It is this consciousness of unity, of common purpose, of many and varied links, which helps Christians to discover their oneness and strength and something of that family awareness which was so marked in the early church. It helps the club leader also to lose that sense of loneliness which can so easily depress the one who works in isolation. It helps to build besides that religious tie, so evident in the African and some of the eastern churches, and evidenced in the growing ecumenical movement, which, so much more than political trends, is an encouraging presage of world unity.

APPENDIX

Christian Youth Ritual

Many C.Y. clubs have adopted this as a traditional closing feature for special occasions. All that is needed is a small table or stool at the middle of the room, and a single candle standing on it. Other lights should be extinguished or dimmed as soon as the candle is lit.

To begin, all stand in a ring, facing inwards, with arms crossed and hands clasping neighbours as for *Auld Lang Syne*. The first verse of *Blest be the Tie that Binds* is then sung, to the tune *Dennis*.

Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love,
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above.

Dennis.

S.M.

HANS G. NÄGELI



Hands remain clasped while a member, who should have been standing by the leader at the head of the room, steps forward; lights the candle; retires to his place, then recites: 'Jesus said: I am the light of the world; he that

followeth me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life.'

Then the leader asks that each member shall pray for his or her right-hand neighbour, and afterwards for the one on the left.

The leader next makes a brief extempore prayer of thanks for the intimate fellowship of the club, and of dedicated allegiance to Christ. It is an 'inward looking' prayer—and might run: 'Dear God, we offer sincere thanks for the Christian fellowship of this club, for all the mutual understanding and intimate friendship which it gives us. And here together we dedicate ourselves. Take and bless us all, and may the bonds created here never be broken.'

Members then release hands and turn about so that they face outwards. They sing the second verse of *Jerusalem*:

Bring me my bow of burning gold !

Bring me my arrows of desire !

Bring me my spear ! O clouds, unfold !

Bring me my chariot of fire !

I will not cease from mental fight,

Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,

Till we have built Jerusalem

In England's green and pleasant land.

Then the leader gives a short 'outward looking' prayer, full of the sense of individual responsibility to the outer world. He might say: 'Jesus, great, glorious, Master, as we, each alone, walk out from this club fellowship into the world, go with us. Keep us loyal to our vows. May we not flinch before temptation. May the light of life burn constant in our hearts and shine in all we do, so that each doing our part we may help to build the Kingdom of Heaven in all the earth.'

Finally, all repeat together:

God be in my head, and in my understanding ;

God be in my eyes, and in my looking ;

God be in my mouth, and in my speaking ;

God be in my heart, and in my thinking ;

God be at my end, and at my departing.

Amen.

(The order of petitions is easy to memorize—coming downwards: head, eyes, mouth, heart. This point, and the whole order of service can be explained quietly before the ritual begins.)

Lastly, the leader gives the benediction:

‘May the grace of love, courage, gaiety, and the quiet mind—which is the grace of the Lord Jesus—be with us and with all those we love, now and evermore. Amen.’

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