

Worker-Priests*Church Times
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THE arguments in favour of his chosen way of life, put forward by an Anglican worker-priest in a forthcoming book, the first extract from which we are happy to publish today, certainly merit the attention of a wide Christian public. Mr. Rowe argues his case with attractive force and lucidity, and he has the undeniable advantage of writing out of his own deeply felt personal experience. Here at any rate is a would-be Christian reformer who is not simply delivering theories from the heights of an ivory tower, but who has put his convictions to the touchstone of costly experiment. That in itself is a refreshing change.

The priest-worker movement inside the Church of England has never shown any sign of developing on the scale known in the Roman Church in France some years ago. For that very reason it is not exposed to the same dangers of being brought by authority to a sudden end. Most observers are likely to feel that it is a limited experiment of great potential value to the Church, even if they find themselves unable to go along with quite all the arguments so ably advanced by Mr. Rowe and his colleagues. In particular, some wry doubts may be expressed by clergy whose stipend is barely half that earned by some trade unionists today, when they read that they are to regard themselves as existing on the privileged and comfortable side of the fence which is said to divide society.

But the main point of interest in Mr. Rowe's book is the degree to which he can be held successful in defending the propriety of a priest disguising his priesthood and refraining, for most of his time, from engaging in specifically priestly activities. Judgment on this should be suspended until readers have had the opportunity to consider his argument in its full extent.