

permitted to any of them which would grieve that blessed guest of the soul. By such means the eye of the spirit would be cleansed to discern things which differ, the heart would be taught to love the good and abhor the evil, and the will would be a ready and vigorous executor of the behests of the conscience.

If these are the results to be desired, then we may help ourselves to understand in what manner the discharge of our Lenten duties may contribute to their attainment. It is sometimes said that Lent is largely kept in a merely mechanical manner which does about as much harm as good. People give up society as a kind of penance, and then go back to it with fresh zeal and zest, feeling that they have paid their price and must now have their reward. Whether this be so or not, or if it is, how far this is the case, it is not easy to decide. But at any rate we may do something to avoid those evils ourselves.

What are the foes to that self-discipline of which we have spoken? They are such as these: Sloth, self-indulgence, pride in its various forms of conceit, vain-glory, ambition, and the like, worldiness, neglect of reading, meditation, prayer. Any one who knows himself at all will confess that we have here some of the chief hindrances to a perfect life.

Sloth is a terrible evil. Spinoza said that conceit and the sloth that came of it were the two monster evils by which humanity was afflicted. How may we use the hours of Lent to correct vices like these? Certainly not by merely putting on an extra amount of work and then dropping it when Lent is over. No; but by calmly considering how we do now employ our time, and whether we get as much work into it as we are bound to get, and the right kind of work, whether we do as much for God, for man, for ourselves, as we might do. Let a man first take one day and ask how he spends it. At what hour does he go to bed and rise? Some persons think that they make up for late hours in the morning by keeping late hours at night. Generally it is quite the contrary. The late hours at night are often as great a mark of sloth as late hours in the morning. A man or a woman who cannot get out of bed in the morning so as to have sufficient time for prayers—public, domestic, private—all or one of these as may be the duty of each—that person cannot be a disciplined person. Clearly, in this case, body and mind are not promptly and fully doing their work.

It is well that we should deny ourselves, to some extent, in the matter of food in Lent; and that we should also ask whether we might at other times cut off some indulgences in this respect. So with regard to society. It is a terrible reflection that there are a good many persons who are actually incapable of voluntarily spending an hour alone. May not this be one of our lessons to be learnt in Lent? Surely this is a part of discipline. It is a custom with many to wear plainer clothing in Lent. Might they not reflect that this is a lesson to be carried into other parts of the year? Then there is the use of the tongue. Whatever we may think of our own employment of that member, many of us are quite aware of the faults of our neighbours in this respect.

The condition of a wise and successful discipline must be a certain amount of self-knowledge, and therefore a careful, humble, impartial self-scrutiny. Take some simple forms of this duty. Begin by asking: How do I spend my time? How do I spend my money? How do I fulfil my appointed duties? Every hour of my life is recorded in the books of God's remembrance, that is on the tablet of my own heart—every moment of it. How will

it read? Every cent that I spend has its own work and will do its own work. Shall I consider that the money which God has given me, whether much or little, has been spent as He intended it should be spent, has done the work for the doing of which He gave it? Or has it been so spent that we have been forced to refuse help to many works which had a claim upon our assistance? These are serious questions; but they are necessary ones. Or take the other one: How have I done my duty? Every man has duties depending upon his position and relations—duties to his own body and soul, to his family, to society, duties connected with his own particular calling in life. Can we each say that we have tried to do them? Have I carefully asked what those duties are? Have I performed them as well, or anything like as well as I could? If we will ask questions like these with real practical intent, then the discipline of Lent will not for us be in vain.

THE SOCIAL TEST.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, in the addresses to his diocese, published under the title of "Christ and His times," has laid special stress upon the relations of the Church to Society. We sometimes meet with attempts to evade the test which our Lord has made so prominent in His teaching: "By their fruits ye shall know them." Thus, when it is asserted, for example, that Roman Catholic populations compare unfavourably with those which are under the influence of reformed Churches, the answer is often given, that these people are "not good Catholics," which, of course, is obvious enough, but misses the point of the argument, which is this—that where a Church has had authority and power, it must be content to have its character judged by the effects which it has produced. This is true of Christianity or the Church at large, and it is true of any particular Church.

This is the teaching of Christ. "From His forerunner's first warning to the last apostolic clause," says the Archbishop, "and onward through all sound unselfish epochs in Christendom, it has been declared with overpowering convictions that the Divine in Man must be proved by visible fruit borne in moral force and social healings. Two combined sayings of Christ, 'I have ordained you that ye should bring forth much fruit and that your fruit should remain,' and 'Heal the sick, cast out devils, freely ye have received, freely give,' make the effect of the Church upon society the test of her faithfulness.

"From the time when the Mission touches the idleness, falseness, shamelessness of the lowest native tribes up to the highest training of Christian children, the manliest exercise of self-restraint, full of justice and free generosity of rich to poor, and peace among nations, her duty is ever to be forwarding, ever lifting the cause of humanity."

His Grace goes on to remark that never has our Lord made this principle more clear to us than in the present day. In the tokens around us and before us we may hear His voice and see His finger. He is asking us what we are doing. Is the Church leavening society with His truth and life? "All men look to see how she stands this test. Effect upon society. If there are places among ourselves in which the test is feebly, scarcely, recognized, we may not rest until the general movement of the Church has reached them. The town and village life of the Church gives, and was intended to give, the greatest scope for the exercise of moral force and social healing: wherever her ministers, with all their advantages

of position [in England, hardly in Canada], are backward—even if they are not outrun by any others—in bringing up the state of morals and the social tone to a higher level (each successor in his own occupation of his benefice) then both the Church and the world have grave reasons to be dissatisfied."

These are weighty words. They go to the heart of the problem. Our sectarian tests are of a very imperfect kind. Churchgoing, almsgiving, and the like are not entirely to be despised as signs of a certain kind of life. The observance of the Lord's Day means something. But, after all, there is a great deal in fashion. How many of those who are now church-goers would fall away if the practice ceased to be a kind of test of respectability? Or, among the non-episcopal communions, how many would backslide, if instead of being thought more of because of their devotion to the cause, it made no difference to them, or perhaps they had even to suffer for it?

The real test of the work of the Church is found in its uplifting of the tone of the society in which it lives and works. And the effect of this will be differently seen at different times. Here is one of the errors that we are apt to commit. At some particular time the Church becomes conscious of the special evils of the age in which she lives, and she lifts up her voice against them. She has received teaching and inspiration for this work. But a new set of circumstances comes about, and the Church keeps on trading on her old capital, repeats her old warnings, now become a kind of Shibboleth, and fails to recognize the special need of the later day, and so is incapable of fulfilling her present duty to society.

If the Church will accomplish her appointed work, she must be ever gaining fresh supplies of the Spirit of her Lord, and thus preparing herself to meet each emergency as it arises. "There is no place anywhere," says the Archbishop, "in which, among changed and changing conditions, spiritual power in all its ability and knowledge and reflection and energy and concentration are not required in a new degree and measure. The stadium is one, though the direction changes. As in the ancient chariot race, one limb of the long course is run; the other lies in its length before us; our chariot has to wheel round the goal with incredible swiftness. All turns upon the judgment, vigour, and alertness of our Love."

These are words and thoughts which may give us food for reflection for many an hour. The Christian Church is under trial by the world and her Lord. Every particular communion is being weighed in the balances, and found—ultimately what she proves to be. God grant that we may not be found wanting!

AGGRESSIVE CHURCH WORK.—HOW TO REACH THE MASSES.

BY ANOTHER TOWN PARSON.

The article in your issue of March 6th reveals a real practical knowledge on the part of the writer, but your present correspondent, who has been long engaged in similar work, desires to add a few words and experiences.

First.—The house to house visitation is the backbone of the way to reach the masses. To reach them the clergy must go to them. On this head, however, I differ a little from your former correspondent as to the 'role' to be adopted. I say, go as a parson. Let men know you come as a clergyman. Let your visit be that of a clergyman. The other kind of visitation you may leave to the dis-

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