

## MOOSOMIN.

St. Albans is just losing Rev. W. G. Lyon, who is returning to England, where he has accepted an important cure. Mr. Lyon, being a man of great energy and a most thorough and systematic worker, leaves, after his nearly two years incumbency, a decided mark for good behind him, every point of Church work having advanced under his fostering care. Mr. Lyon is also a great loss to the Diocese generally, having been for some years Secretary of the Synod.

## DEVOTIONAL BOOKS AND THEIR USE.

The spiritual life, like the physical, thrives best when tended methodically and regularly. System and order are as necessary for the soul as for the body, and he who neglects the daily prayer and the daily meditation or reading, will suffer as really and truly as does he who is careless and untimely in his eating and drinking. It is a mistake to suppose that the higher and heavenly interests of man can be secured or the spiritual life be developed by the haphazard or intermittent use of grace, so common in these latter days. When the soul is starved half the time, no wonder it grows weak and sickly, and no wonder powerful and dangerous stimulants are needed to arouse it from torpidity and to give it the semblance of life. Unfortunately the desire for stimulants grows, and, in due time instead of helping they ruin the constitution, and the victim thereof is led to imagine that the emotions which agitate his soul, the depression or exhilaration, are sure signs of religious power. But of devotion to duty, self-sacrifice, the quiet strong dependence upon God and the growth in grace, he knows nothing.

The drift of Anglican Churchmanship has been ever in the opposite direction. It has sought to inculcate a sober, steady and orderly observance of those means and methods which God has given and whereby the soul may be kept in good health and its varied powers be strengthened and advanced. Hence for the public services of the Church is set forth the Book of Common Prayer, in which the congregation, and with the congregation the individual worshipper, is led to think of those truths and to offer to God those prayers and praises which express a symmetrical faith and develop a well-proportioned life. The stress laid upon Sacred Scripture in the several orders and offices of the Church is sufficiently known to everybody.

For the devotional life, therefore, the Book of Common Prayer, with its Lessons and Collects, its Psalms and Prayers is a noble and splendid guide and help. It has been made the foundation upon which other books have been written for the use of the Christian in his private devotions; and to-day there abides a wealth of manuals and treatises from which one can select such as may thoroughly satisfy one's tastes and effectively further one's growth.

The Clergy, by their knowledge of Greek and Latin, have at their disposal the rich and abundant treasures of patristic and mediæval times. They realize the fulness and sweetness of lines which lie imbedded like gems of living lustre in the pages of ancient liturgies, and in the prayers of masters and princes of the Faith. Breviaries and Primers, if to some dreary and could, are to others even as the sun rays, full of charm and warmth. But the Clergy have no greater favorite than the little book of the saintly Bishop

Andrewes. For more than two hundred years his "Private Devotions" have been in the possession of The Church, yet have the beautiful and spiritual flowings of prayer never grown old. One's soul seems to rest itself on the calm stream and to drift heavenward, joyous with the music of the rhythmic lines and hopeful with the touch of deep, strong life. Not a few of the clergy have found help also in Hele's "Select offices of Private Devotion"—an old-fashioned but none the less worthy work, and as well suited for a layman as a clergyman.

And it is to books of this wider purpose that we desire rather to direct attention, and especially to some which have been for long years in the hands of the people. Yet our space admits only of the mention of two or three of these; a multitude will be passed unnoticed.

Of the "Imitation of Christ" and the "Christian Year" nothing need be said. They are in everybody's hand; so likewise are the allegories of the "Shepherd of Hermas," Spenser's "Faerie Queen" and Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress." Reprints of the Primers are also common. But among the books that are being pushed aside is the "Whole Duty of Man." It was first published about 1659, and for many generations, next to the Bible and the Prayer Book, was the most popular book in England. Like Jewel's "Apology" and Foxe's "Book of Martyrs," it was chained to lecterns in the Church, so that everybody could read it, and not a few of the old divines declare it to be the best book ever printed. Devout families read it through three times a year, as the title-page says can be done at the rate of a chapter every Sunday. It is a plain, unadorned and practical setting forth of Christian duty, and, though extremely unsentimental and rhetorically faulty, is to be commended in these days of lax discipline. It will not stir up the emotions, but it will help to the straightforward, honest discharge of obligations due to God and to our neighbour. Beside it may be placed a rare and almost entirely forgotten work, by Bishop Beveridge, entitled "Thoughts on Personal Religion." If the reader chance to find a copy of this little book—even though it be covered with the dust of a second-hand book-store—by all means let him buy it. The cheapness of the volume is no criterion of its worth. It is full of helpfulness and grace.

A book of perhaps even greater worth than either of these is Robert Nelson's "Practice of True Devotion." Nelson was a layman, and is probably better known by his "Companion for the Festivals and Fasts"—a work that has never been superseded, and a work, too, that should be in the hands of every Churchman. But the "Practice of True Devotion," though published two hundred years ago, is still reprinted and widely distributed. It has naught to do with controversy, but is designed to draw men to "the solid and substantial part of religion, the spirit of life and devotion." The language is simple and dignified, without being rich or warm; the teaching is thoroughly practical. Says the revered author in his preface: "The following method of devotion is recommended to the constant practice of all such Christians, who are not willing to content themselves with only a form of godliness, and who are not desirous to be found among the number of those that go such a sauntering pace towards heaven, as if they were indifferent whether they arrived or not at those mansions of bliss." The writer was in earnest, and he imparts his earnestness to the reader. His instructions, meditations and prayers are full of grace and knowledge; and though in these days many brighter and

easier books have been put forth to help the Christian in his daily life, yet Nelson's Manual is for spiritual worth and helpfulness second to none of them.

For the benefit of young communicants few treatises have had a greater popularity than Bishop Wilson's "Short and Plain Instruction for the Better Understanding of the Lord's Supper." It is exceedingly simple; one could scarcely miss its meaning or fail to profit by its devotions. That it is not in general use to-day is no proof against its merits. They who know it cherish it with a rare affection.

Books such as these are not intended to take the place of the Book of Common Prayer, "than which," says the last named author "there never was provided a better help to devotion." Nor is it supposed that they will detract from the reverence for, and the use of, the Bible. They are rather supplementary to these, and are designed to work with them for the good of the Christian soul. By their help knowledge may be acquired and a comprehensive and proportionate view of truth obtained. They must be used as a means to an end; and that end must be an increase of grace and the glory of God.

The devout Christian will give some time every day to the reading of the Bible; but that reading, in order to be profitable, must be systematic. A good plan is to take the Calendar of Lessons, set forth in the Prayer Book, and go steadily through it. By that course the whole Bible will be read through orderly and with due appreciation of the ecclesiastical year. Doubtless most people each Sunday before proceeding to morning service peruse the Epistle and Gospel for the day; at all events, such is a profitable preparation for Church.

We desire to see continued in the Church that calm and sturdy devotion which has ever been one of her characteristics. We want to see life, rather than to hear the rustling and rippling of uncertain and fluctuating emotions. To this end we believe the use of proper approved devotional books is helpful. If the Spirit of God has used them as a means of blessing to others, He may still do so for our benefit.—*The American Church, S. S. Magazine.*

## Correspondence.

To the Editor of THE CHURCH GUARDIAN,

DEAR SIR,—Pray allow me space for a word of warning to my brethren of the Clergy against attempting to influence the election of delegates to the Quebec Synod in places where that office is still vacant, by offering suggestions as to the names of candidates, as I understand is being done. Circumstances might arise in which the fact of their having done so at such a time as this would prove seriously compromising. I would, of course, except the case of Clergy giving counsel, when necessary, to their own parishioners.

I would further caution the clergy against committing themselves by any, even the least kind of promise, to support any candidate. We should go to the Synod *absolutely free*.

Yours truly,

G. H. PARKER.

Compton, 27th May 1892.

**TO TEMPERANCE WORKERS.**—We purpose devoting a considerable portion of the space in the next number of **The Guardian** to a report of "The Church of England Temperance Society's" May meetings in England. Extra copies can be had by addressing the Editor, P. O. box 504, Montreal.