

did He use the solemn language. "The disciple is not above his Master, but every one that is perfect shall be as his Master." By all means let us tell our people to be holy, and with this end in view let us employ in turn every argument which is furnished in God's Word—let us "reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine." But after all let us remember there is no argument so cogent as the argument of a holy life. Our sermons may be very good; but if when our people turn from them to us—to our walk and conversation—to see what we really mean, they can discover no evidence of exalted piety, how can we wonder if all our reward be a barren admiration of us as eloquent or clever. On the other hand our sermons may be very poor, but we may depend upon it that in the highest of all senses they will be telling if only in our private life we make it manifest that we are "men of God," men who flee from evil in every shape, and follow after "righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness." A life of this kind is intelligible to the meanest capacity—even infidels before now have confessed its influence. And let us remember that because as clergymen it is our duty to incite others to holiness, it does not follow that we are careful in regard to our own spiritual life. It is the saying of Solomon, "They made me keeper of the vineyard, but mine own vineyard have I not kept." So it is quite possible to take pains for others, and to be neglectful of one's self, nay, to make the pains we take for others a reason for assuming that personally all must needs be well with us. I appeal to all my brethren whether on this point I am not borne out by their own experience; whether they have not found it intensely difficult to keep off a moral torpor produced by the mere frequency of contact with solemn and magnificent things. Well has it been said, "Religion of all matters is that which will least bear to be handled professionally;" and yet by his profession the minister is constantly required to dilate on this very subject, and this, too, under circumstances which are often very unfavourable to his own spirituality. Indeed his task would be hard enough if every day he could secure so many hours for the quiet preparation of what he has to deliver in Christ's name, even when he would be tempted to overlook his own need in his anxiety for those committed to his charge. But how is the difficulty increased in these busy times, when so "many are coming and going,"—when committee meetings are so frequent, and when in other ways the attention is so often directed from spiritual things to secular! No doubt it is possible to be eminently saintly notwithstanding all these and other drawbacks. There is such a thing as performing the most worldly service "after a godly sort;" and after all, our hindrances are not greater than were those of David and Daniel and the Apostle Paul, who, though immersed in business, were eminent for spirituality. Still—and this is all I assert—our task is difficult; and being difficult it is all the more important that we should set ourselves resolutely to face it.

And now in suggesting some practical hints, I would begin with the remark, that as "every good gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights," if we want our spiritual life deepened, we must look to God for the special communication of His grace. It is with ministers in this respect precisely as it is with their congregations. If we wish our people to make progress, do we not urge them to be diligent in the use of means, and if in any respect we observe them to be remiss, do we not feel it our duty, sometimes even in private, to remind them of their obligation? Of course then we ourselves must not be backward in seeking grace through God's own appointed channels, as otherwise we shall lay ourselves open to reproach, "Thou therefore, that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?" Nor must we in acting upon this hint content ourselves with a devout performance of our public ministrations. Indeed we may be very thankful that so much of that which the Church requires us to speak in the sanctuary is distinctively spiritual. Only let us use aright the admirable language of our Liturgy—the prayers, the praises, the thanksgivings which have been repeated in so many congregations through so long a course of ages; only in particular let us be careful to eat and drink worthily when we administer the Holy Communion; and it is hard to understand how we can fail to have much of the life of God within us. Still it is wise in this matter to be guided as well by the Word of God, as by the universal experience of the saints; and these are most emphatic in demanding that to public devotions we should add those of the closet. Even our Divine Master himself we know was careful to secure seasons for private communion with His Heavenly Father, and that He laid great stress upon the same practice for His apostles is evident from His direction to the twelve on their return from a special mission to preach, "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place and rest awhile." It is in private that we can best seek for the Divine blessing on our public ministrations. And if we had no other reason for determining at any cost to secure so much time every day for being alone with God, this of itself should be sufficient. But besides this reason for daily

retirement, there is the fact that by no other method can we hope to prosper in our own spiritual life. Just as we need food for our bodies, so do we need food for our souls; and either, therefore, we must take pains in regard to our private devotions, or abandon all idea of attaining to any high standard of spirituality. It is said of Luther that it was his custom to give his three best hours of the day to spiritual communion with his God. Who can doubt that this was one great secret as well of his holiness as of his usefulness; and who can doubt that ministers in general would attain to far greater eminence if in this particular they were content to imitate his example.

But when I speak of private devotions of course I do not exclusively refer to prayer. There is such a thing as *devotional meditation*, when the mind is occupied with the thoughts of those works and ways of the Supreme Being which repeat and reflect from every side His great idea, and which serve to make the feeling of His presence intimate and familiar. By all means when we retire let us devote some of our time to the contemplation both of what God is and of what He has done; and as the ideas of power, wisdom, and love unite in one great Being, whose presence fills the soul, we shall scarcely fail to inhale His quickening spirit, and to join with angels and arch-angels in praising His glorious name? So again there is such a thing as *devotional reading*, and needing as we do some impulse from without to wake up our slumbering energies, no doubt we shall do well on retiring to give ourselves to the perusal of such writings as elevate principles and refine the moral sense. We may thank God that of such writings the Christian possesses a rich store—many of them within the reach of the poorest of us—only let us use them in a right spirit, and often we shall find ourselves, we know not how or why, awake and alive to God, when just before we were wholly occupied with the world. And if uninspired compositions are thus elevating, how much more shall we find the written oracles of God! Only we must be careful not merely to read with a purpose, but to see that our purpose is the deepening of our own spiritual life. It is loss to read mainly with a view to the spiritual improvement of others. Who of us has not been tempted on coming to some striking passage to begin forthwith to think of its application to our people? But this tempter we must resist, assured that we are never so likely to do well for others, as when we have attended to our own wants. It is well, no doubt, for the clergyman to cultivate a homiletic habit—he will hardly do much in his profession if he does not acquire a faculty in skeletonizing. But it is at his own peril if he fails inwardly to digest his own portion of God's truth. This he can hardly do if in dealing with Scripture he does not commence with its application to himself. And then, also, once more, there is such a thing as habitual communion with the Lord Jesus Christ. Is He not the Bridegroom, the Head, the Physician, the Advocate, the Shepherd, the Master of the Church? These names all imply a corresponding intercourse with Him on the part of His believing members—and where such intercourse is not maintained,—I say not in the closet alone, but in all places, and under all circumstances—there may be orthodoxy, there may be zeal, there may even be piety—but assuredly there will be no exalted spirituality. Yes, my brethren, what we have all to learn is to turn to Christ in every need—to consult him in every difficulty—to tell Him alike of our sorrows and our joys—to do all as in His sight, and to go through every day leaning on, and looking to Him. Then only shall we be able to exclaim with St. Paul, "To me, to live is Christ." "The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith in the Son of God." Then only shall we know what it is to have our souls throb with the pulsations of a strong spiritual life.

But, to complete my subject, I ought to say something of things to be avoided. Let me conclude with three hints on the negative side of the question.

The first is, that we should exercise constant watchfulness in regard to little faults. Decay in a tree is first seen at the extreme end of its smaller branches, and a leak neglected is likely to end in the foundering of a mighty ship. So the little things of every-day life have a solemn bearing on the spiritual well-being of Christians. If we wish our souls to prosper, we must take heed of what we say and what we think. We must beware of giving way to a hasty temper. We must endeavor to be uniformly meek, courteous, gentle, and considerate. Is it not written, "He that despiseth small things shall fall by little and little?" Yea, is it not written, "He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much, and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much?"

However, we must beware of worldliness. There was a time when ministers were chiefly remarkable for their worldly compliances. They saw no harm in the chase, the theatre, the ball room, the card table, and the race-course. Now public opinion is against these things for clergymen, and clergymen, as a rule, acquiesce in the popular verdict; but none the less are they tempted in other ways to indulge in a worldly spirit, and in proportion as they yield, it may be feared their spirituality suffers. I say in other ways,

for do not think of the flesh still meet us at every step, and are they not just as attractive as ever to that *pharisaical selfishness*, which remains even in the regenerate? I know that, like other men, ministers have need of relaxation. It may even be that, accustomed as they are to the solemn things, they need more than others to have their thoughts diverted occasionally into some earthly channel; but if so, then all the more have they need to be careful, lest liberty should degenerate into license, especially in the present day, when Church amusements are so common, in the shape of concerts and penny readings. I do not say—far from it—that the clergyman should never give to these things the sanction of his presence, neither do I say that he should never accept invitations to the private houses of his parishioners. But probably he will do well to decline more often than he accepts. Once let him be known as a frequenter of parties, or of amusements, and not merely with his influence be diminished, but also his spirituality.

Just one other hint. We should take care not to lay too much stress upon non-essentials. We should never enjoin or forbid where God's Word is silent. What for the most part are the points concerning which Christians are disagreed, and concerning which they strive in direct opposition to God's command? Are they not points of comparatively small importance—points which do not touch the vitals of religion, however interesting or important they may be in their way? By all means let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind; but then, also, let him extend to others the same liberty which he claims for himself, remembering how it is written, "circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but faith which worketh by love;" remembering, too, that every man standeth or falleth to his own Master. Nothing, perhaps, is more common than a disposition to bend others, even in trifles, to our own way of thinking. At the same time, nothing is more destructive of Christian love, or more likely to bring leanness into our souls.

Diocesan Intelligence.

MONTREAL.

(From Our Own Correspondent.)

FRELIGHSBURG.—The Founder's Festival in connection with the Bishop Stewart Memorial church was a marked success. Old Trinity was built in 1804, and of its opening we have the following account: "Early in the year 1809 a new church was completed in the Eastern part of the Seignior, and when Divine Service was performed in it for the first time, on a fine day in January, there was a congregation of a thousand persons." The anniversary of this historical event, falling this year on Saturday, for manifest reasons, the anchorman was committed to celebrating the day following—Sunday, Jan. 30th. While the severe weather forbade the hope of the vast concourse of thousands which witnessed the laying of the Corner Stone in June last, it did not prevent the attendance of a large congregation on the Lord's Day, to take possession of the splendid Lecture Hall which will hereafter afford a commodious, convenient and comfortable home for devotional, philanthropic and Parochial purposes of the Church of England. It proved itself all that could be desired in the healthfulness, warmth and lightness of its attractive surroundings. The morning Service was rendered in an appropriate and warm-hearted manner by the choir and the congregation, the sermon being delivered by the Rector, Rev. J. Burrows Davidson, followed by the Holy Communion, at which there was a large number of communicants. The Rev. J. C. Davidson took part in the services. In the evening, after an earnest service of Praise, the sermon was preached by the Rev. Homer White, M. A., Rector at Enosburg, Vt., admirably suited in its instructive and eloquent features and kindly references to the occasion, and exacting the appreciation of his auditors. On the next evening, Monday, the Re-union of all friends was one long to be remembered, and one eminently cheering to all concerned. The bounties of the ladies in supplying very attraction to appetite and taste were overflowing, and their attendance unceasing until all were satisfied. Then came a characteristic speech of eloquence and wit from one of the chief workers in the enterprise, S. N. Hunter, Esq., which secured the attention and earned the applause of all. Subsequently the assemblage, after hymn and prayer, was addressed by the Rector, the Rev. J. Smith, the Rev. George Forneret, the Rev. Mr. Richardson, the Rev. J. C. Davidson and the Rev. F. M. English, the latter in his singularly versatile mind, his modestly styled "Musical Sketches," developed themselves into irresistible fascination which kept the attention rivetted so that time became imperceptible, until by a change of actors the spell being broken. Much deserved thanks were given to the chief benefactors and practical sympathizers—the Stanbridge band, and nu-