

the clinging to Christ as Elisha clung to Elijah. The devout man will have Christ with him to guide him, to help him to distinguish between works outwardly alike, but really differing as bad from good. Devotion too enables men to judge not from the standpoint of worldly expediency, just as Christ judged when Satan tempted. It is impossible to enumerate the gifts which devotion adds to those who practise it. If without work the spiritual life is a sham, yet no amount of work can make up for the lack of devotion.

The Rev. A. B. Trevelyan has written a little work entitled, "Suggestions on the Method of Meditations," which will be of much value to all who wish to increase in devotion; in an appendix are to be found extracts from St. Bernard's "Scala Claustralium," the ladder with four steps, viz: "Reading, Meditation, Prayer, Contemplation," in the last of which, he says, "carnal motions are so consumed and absorbed by the mind, that in nothing does the flesh contradict the spirit, and the man becomes, as it were, wholly spiritual."

3rd Paper by the Rev. Professor Allnatt.

PRIVATE DEVOTION,—ITS DIFFICULTIES AND HELPS.

Under the first head Professor Allnatt enumerated eight leading sources of hindrance to the life and effect of devotion.

One preliminary and vital, that namely of *Unforgotten and indulged sin*, producing by its presence utter paralysis of the devotional principle.

Three relating to the Plan of our devotions.

(1) *Insufficiency of the time* appropriated to this purpose, and the loss thereby of the calmness of spirit and deliberation essential to communion with God. A scheme was suggested, representing a minimum of time for daily private worship, and covering a period of an hour and twenty-five minutes; it being assumed that this duty must necessarily take precedence of all others. (2) *Lack of system*, producing vagueness and indefiniteness in our devotions, involving loss of power and of result. (3) The opposite fault of *Formality*, the use of book-prayers being discussed under this head, though this fault often exists apart from such use.

Four of a personal character: (1) Lack of *self-surrender*, as an act deliberately carried into every department of private devotion. (2) *Self-seeking*, not in a gross and earthly sense, but in that of too exclusive attention to one's own needs and doings, to the neglect of praise and of intercession. (3) Lack of the *due effort of Faith*, and concessions to doubt and unbelief. (4) The peculiarly clerical danger arising from *familiarity* with sacred things and occupations.

Among *Helps*—in addition to those dealt with under the former head—he enumerated five requisites for this end.

1st, Learn to *love* your devotions, this being a thing that is to be learned, and may be learned by any who take the necessary steps for so doing; 2ndly, accustom yourselves to realize the presence of Christ, throughout the whole course of your devotions, grasp this, and hold on to this. 3rdly, acquire the habit (which any one can acquire) of concentration of thought, and of overcoming distracting influences of all kinds: 4thly, learn to utilize, for the purpose of devotion, odds and ends of time which might otherwise be wasted,—while walking, or waiting, for a train, funeral, etc.; 5thly, practise sedulously, though cautiously, the exercise of Meditation.

DISCUSSION.

Rev. F. G. Scott suggested the holding of Retreats for the clergy. Especially in isolated parishes they are subject to spiritual starvation. Some of his brethren might not see their advisability, but he was sure all agreed in what Mr. Gladstone had called the "heart truths of Christianity," and in retreats it was these truths which were specially emphasized. He felt that the present gathering had been very helpful to the spiritual and devotional life.

Some objections were here raised to Mr. Scott's words with reference to those who would not encourage the experiment of retreats and some difference of opinion as to their desirability was expressed, after which, in resuming discussion upon the papers,

Rev. Rural Dean Thompson remarked that he felt like the Scotch minister who spoke of "confusion due to fulness." He had taken notes of the papers read and hoped to carry away