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CARDINAL GIBBONS ON PRAYER.

The Sovereign Remedy for Clouded and Dejected Spirits.

Cardinal Gibbons resumed his monthly sermons at the Cathedral in Baltimore on October 2nd. He preached to the large congregation and spoke on the Feast of the Guardian Angels. The text was taken from the first to the tenth verses of the eighteenth chapter of St. Matthew. He said in part:

We are told in the Book of Genesis that the patriarch Jacob in a dream had a vision in which he beheld a ladder extending from earth to heaven and the angels of God ascending and descending. This vision reveals to us the dignity of prayer and the ministry of the angels of God, who bear our prayers to the throne of grace and return bringing us benedictions from our Heavenly Father.

The same ministry of the angels is referred to in the Book of Tobit. We are told there that the angel Raphael, in human shape, accompanied the young Tobias on a long journey and on his return revealed himself to the elder Tobias and said to him: "Prayer with fasting is good. When thou didst pray with tears and bury the dead, when thou didst leave thy dinner and bury the dead, I offered thy prayers to the Lord."

Humble and earnest prayer—for this is the only sort of prayer worth considering—is the source of light to the mind, of comfort to the heart and of strength to the will. By prayer we ascend, like Moses, to the holy mountain. There He removes the scales from our eyes. He dispels the clouds of passion, of prejudice and of ignorance which envelopes us. He sheds a flood of light upon us which enables us to see things as they really are.

MAN'S LITTLENESS REVEALED.

Standing on that mountain, we see the shortness of time and how it passes like a shadow, and we see the immeasurable length of eternity. We are penetrated with a sense of the greatness of God alone and the littleness of man, and if we perceive anything attractive in him it is because he is shining with borrowed light. We observe how paltry and trifling are all things earthly, since they are passing away; and, like the beloved John, we get a glimpse of the heavenly Jerusalem. It is time, indeed, that outside of prayer we acknowledge these truths.

But it is only in prayer that we fully realize them and relish them and that the words of the Apostle are brought home to us: "We have not here a lasting city, but we seek one that is to come."

It was while St. Paul was in an ecstasy of prayer that was revealed to him the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven and was given him an insight of the glory to come: "Which eye has not seen nor ear heard nor the heart of man is able to conceive."

St. Thomas Aquinas was one of the most eminent scholars which Christianity has produced in nineteen centuries. His vast mind ranged over the entire fields of theology and philosophy. His works are an inexhaustible storehouse for statesmen and divines. Being asked one day what was his favorite book, St. Thomas replied that he acquired more knowledge by meditating at the foot of the cross than from any other source.

KNOWLEDGE OF SIN BY PRAYER.

While we need not expect that God will reveal to us in prayer, as He did to St. Paul and St. Thomas, the mysteries of the kingdom, He will enlighten us on a subject far more useful and profitable to us. He will send His searchlight into the hidden recesses of our souls and disclose to us our hidden sins and transgressions, our imperfections and shortcomings, our vanities and illusions. He will search Jerusalem with lamps," as He said by His prophet. He will make His lamp shine within the temple of our hearts and lay bare before us the dust of smaller vices which had accumulated there unobserved for months—aye, for years. There are pages that seem to need the changing and heightening effect of string and wind combinations to show them to the best advantage. Everybody's Magazine.

COMBES' LATEST PLANS.

He Hopes to Mule and Cripple the Church in France.

According to the latest cable advices from Paris, it is not considered likely now that Premier Combes will draft a scheme of his own for the separation of Church and State, but will submit a scheme drawn by Aristide Briant and thus secure a double advantage. If the bill is defeated the government need not resign, while if it is adopted it can find plenty of excuses for delaying its execution. M. Briant, in giving the broad outlines of his scheme, says: "The budget of worship will be suppressed, but the unconsolidated part will be devoted to paying the pensions of actual ministers of worship and the balance will go for the lessening of taxation of small farmers, who form the chief support of the Church."

"If the Church has inspired these farmers with a lively faith she can recover the money as individual, but no longer as collective, contributions. If the farmer is not sufficiently fervent to make a personal sacrifice it is not the duty of the State to supply him with faith."

"In regard to the church buildings, they will be leased to actual holders for ten years, but the tenants will have to keep them in complete repair at their own expense for that time. The transitional period of ten years should be enough to enable the churches to make other definite arrangements for the future."

"Considerable license will be allowed the clergy for the purpose of grouping themselves into associations. There may be parish and diocesan associations, why not national ones? This would enable the rich parishes to help support poor ones, and form a solidarity not much practised in the Church in France at present."

"In regard to the supervision of worship, the State will forbid all ministers from turning religious services into political meetings. In their sermons they must not attack the President, the Ministers or the Chambers, nor foment a rising against the execution of law. In their private capacity, however, they will enjoy the same liberty as other citizens for the expression of political views."

"The question of dealing with external signs, religious emblems and processions is left to municipalities. The usage in regard to clerical costume is left free, but loses its privileges in regard to the legal oath which each may take according to his conscience."

A Tone-Poem After Poe.

Mr. Henry F. Gilbert, who has been associated with Mr. Farwell in the promotion of the movement looking to the recognition of the younger school of American composers, is, like his fellow-musician, a thoroughgoing independent in his ideas and practices. For him, too, the stereotyped and the usual have no artistic usefulness whatsoever. His imagination is most keenly aroused by the modern and the contemporary in poetry and thought; so that one finds him resorting continually, for inspiration and stimulus, to such masters of the present as Maeterlinck, Flaubert, Verlaine. One of his most vivid and effective works is an aria, highly colored and of intense dramatic expression, based upon a passage from Flaubert's "Salambo." In the latest issue of the Wa-Wan publications Mr. Gilbert is represented by an extended paraphrase, for piano, of Poe's prose fantasy, "The Island of Fay." Mr. Gilbert has found a congenial and quickening theme for musical elaboration in the poet's conception of a magical episode of enchanted forest depths and mysterious fairy presences, and he has woven about it a musical fabric as fine and delicate as gossamer. He has caught admirably the mood of dream and remote elusiveness conveyed by the words, and has composed a tone-paraphrase of unquestionable beauty and vividness. There are many passages of lingering tenderness, of rare imaginative force, and the writing has an invariable distinction and individuality. It is to be hoped that Mr. Gilbert will some day, if he has not already done so, score this work for orchestra. There are pages that seem to need the changing and heightening effect of string and wind combinations to show them to the best advantage. Everybody's Magazine.

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