

## THE TRUE IDEAL OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE.

A PAPER READ BEFORE THE CLERICAL CONFERENCE IN ST. JOHN, BY THE REV. P. J. FILLUEL, B. A., RURAL DEAN, WEYMOUTH, N. S.

(CONTINUED).

But the spiritual mind knowing that grace was imparted in Baptism, was renewed and increased in Confirmation, will desire to have his pardon sealed afresh, and his graces strengthened and nourished in the Holy Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ. Here in this hidden mystery, when "Christ is evidently set forth crucified before his eyes," penitence will be deepened, and there will be renewed horror for these sins which required so stupendous a sacrifice for their remission! But the words of our compassionate Lord: "*This is my blood of the New Testament which is shed for the remission of sins,*" taken hold of by faith, which is the instrument of our salvation, fill the heart with comfort and peace. But, because faith is weak and staggering, it requires helps; and God has given us a seal and a sure pledge of His irrevocable promise for the greater assurance of our feeble faith. The humble believing soul has his pardon assured him and he partakes of the Body and Blood of Christ in the way only in which they can be received. Here in this Heavenly Feast his Saviour will "manifest Himself unto him," will kindle in his heart fresh desires, and aid him in fresh efforts for advancement in the spiritual life. He will be present *always*; absent *never*. Among other means specially by constant partaking of Him mystically, who said, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His Blood, ye have no life in you," he will be gradually growing in grace, for he is subjected to the influences by which the Holy Spirit moulds the character, and stamps the image of Christ upon the heart.

Dr. Herman Whitsius, a celebrated German divine of the last century, made the following remarks in reference to the institution of the Lord's Supper: "Had it pleased our Lord to give His disciples a piece cut off from His body for them to eat, or some drops of His Blood to drink, even that itself would not be sufficient for salvation, nor have accomplished a saving communication with Christ, which is not a carnal, but a spiritual thing; yet the disciples would thereby have had a very effectual sign of the mystical union. But now He substitutes bread in place of His Body, wine in place of His Blood, when He says, "*This is my Body,*" "*This is my Blood,*" and bids us be no less assured, by that pledge of His mystical communion, than if we took His very body into our hands and mouths.

In Bengel's celebrated Gnomon, (3 vols), a new edition of which has of late years been brought out by two eminent English scholars, we have this note on that portion of the vi. chapter of St. John, in which Christ says, "*I am the Bread of Life.*" "Jesus so framed his words that at the time they were spoken, and ever after, they might be literally applied to the spiritual enjoyment men have in Him. He so framed them, that, in after time, they might consequently and appropriately be applied to the most holy mystery of the Lord's Supper, when it was subsequently instituted. For to the Holy Eucharist He applied the very subject of this discourse. So important is this sacrament that we may easily conceive that Jesus one year before it took place, foretold it, just as He foretold the treachery of Judas in the 71st verse, and His own death in this verse. There can be no doubt he was thinking of the last Supper when He spoke these words— He wished His disciples subsequently to remember the prediction He had made. All that our Lord says respecting His flesh and blood is said with reference to His Passion and to the Holy Eucharist. Hence it is, that the *flesh and the blood* are invariably mentioned separately, for in His passion the blood was drawn from His body, and the Lamb was slain."

The Spiritual life is a *mental* life—reading and meditation therefore are most important means of nourishing it. It is weak and feeble and must be

fostered with assiduous care. The Word of God is of preeminent importance in invigorating our faith and directing our practice. "*Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.*" In the Sacred Oracles only can we get our minds stored with leading ideas of Christian doctrine, in short, for all that is necessary to Godly life, and need I add that we must bring to the Bible such an humble and teachable spirit as will conduce to our sense of God's immediate presence on our minds. And thus shall we meditate on these sacred truths as conveying to us the Voice of God Himself, "and we shall receive its several communications, not as the word of *man*, but as it is in truth, the Word of God which effectually worketh in them that believe." "Thy word is very pure therefore Thy servant loveth it." It is recorded of the Rev. Henry Martyn, Missionary of the Church of England of which he was so bright an ornament, that when he was engaged in the perusal of any work which he feared was unduly absorbing his attention, he laid it aside, until he found that the Bible had regained its ascendancy over his mind.

If I am not trenching on the duty of others, I feel constrained to refer to the "Daily Round" as a subsidiary aid to devotion. This work, doubtless known to many of the clergy, appeared about two or three years ago. Independent of its being written in a devout, edifying and attractive style, it has the great advantage of being framed on the lines of the Church, and contains a page of admirable reading for every day in the year, besides the festivals and other occasions.

Prayer is a great, an unspeakable privilege, and will be prized by the spiritual mind as those wells of salvation from which he may draw daily supplies of living water. In prayer we should most penitently confess sin, deplore short comings, earnestly seek pardon, and importunately ask grace to withstand "the sin which doth so easily beset us." Prayer will gain for us spiritual strength. Truly then should we "pray always, watching thereunto with all perseverance."

Now in asking for *temporal* benefits we should endeavour to bring our minds in conformity with the Divine Will. An individual may pray for what is really not good for him; he may indeed ask for that which, if granted, may prove a hindrance to his progress in the spiritual life. But in the withholding of what is asked may there not often be an immeasurably greater boon conferred than the bestowal of the object could bestow? For let it be borne in mind that things which are possible in themselves may not be possible with respect to certain prescribed conditions. Nevertheless the petitions are not disregarded; they may prove effectual in another sense. The Christian will be taught his weakness, ignorance and utter reliance on his Heavenly Father's wisdom and love. But, then, in praying for *all means of grace*, that they may be abundantly bestowed and prove effectual, we are absolutely certain that *our* will here is in accordance with the Divine Will—"He willeth our sanctification," "that we should be perfect and entire, wanting nothing"—"complete in Him;" that we should be pure in our thoughts and intentions, upright and just in all our dealings, truthful in our words, loving our very enemies (if such there be), those who have done us wrong, or wished us ill, maintaining earnestly, but wisely, "the faith once delivered to the saints," and so "growing up unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

(To be continued.)

## BOOK NOTICES, REVIEWS, &c.

THE PAGE OF JESUS: OR THOUGHTS FOR THE MATURE CONCERNING THE NATURE OF THE WORD OF GOD.

We are indebted to the Canadian publishers, Messrs. Hunter, Rose & Co., Toronto, for a copy of the above work. The publishers call it "a very remarkable book," which indeed it is, but remarkable more for its strange distortion of the Scriptural narrative, and for its fanciful explanations of Divine Truths, than for any important addition to the religious literature of the day. The book

comes to us with certain eulogistic criticisms, among others one purporting to be from a Church of England Review, but we should seriously question the right of such a critic to speak for the Church of England. Indeed we consider his criticism quite enough to make him out but a sorry Churchman, and we do not wonder at his name and the name of his Review being withheld. Notwithstanding the flattering criticisms which introduce it to us we must candidly declare, without going into particulars, that we cannot admire the book. It displays remarkable ingenuity and diligence, but from a Church standpoint it is not orthodox Christianity. We regret not being able to endorse the work, for the Canadian publishers deserve encouragement, so admirable is the appearance of the volume, both in binding, paper and presswork.

THE RELATION OF CHRISTIANITY, to Civil Society, by Samuel Smith Harris, D. D., L. L. D., Bishop of Michigan; New York, THOS. WHITTAKER. Price \$1.25.

These are the Bampton Lectures for 1883, delivered in the Church of the Holy Trinity, Philadelphia, in Advent last, and take high rank among the best lectures on this excellent foundation. The subject, which will be readily recognized as a comprehensive one, is treated in a masterly manner, making plain that the lecturer is not only learned in Theology but possesses great legal acumen and an extensive knowledge of the theory of government. The lectures are those of a Lawyer and Statesman, as well as an able Theologian, and while we take exception to one or two of the Bishop's positions, which to an Englishman are not altogether satisfactory, as a whole the book is extremely valuable, and will do a good work in making better understood the intimate relations which exist, or ought to exist, between Christianity and Civil Society, although the Bishop distinctly opposes any connection approaching the English Church and State in the United States. The American Church may well be congratulated on being able to produce such wise and learned men as the Bishop in these Lectures has shown himself to be.

BUCKLEY & ALLEN, Halifax, have our thanks for Harper's Magazine for May, which is an exceedingly interesting and beautifully illustrated number. Among other articles—

"Roman Carnival Sketches," by Anna Bowman Blake, is an entertaining and picturesque paper, illustrated by Mr. Reinhart.

An exceedingly interesting story of the building of the Brooklyn Bridge is contributed by William C. Conant, with twenty-one illustrations.

Walter Herries Pollock contributes an article of great literary value on Anthony Trollope, accompanied by an excellent portrait.

The frontispiece of the Number is a fine engraving of Mr. Abbey's picture, "The Sisters."

John Fiske concludes his studies of the colonial period with an interesting and thoughtful paper entitled "The Middle Colonies before the Revolution."

Poems are contributed by Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, Herbert E. Clarke, and Louise Chandler Moulton.

Mr. George William Curtis in the *Editors Easy Chair*, while commending the courage of Dr. Dix's Lenten sermons on the frailties of the fashionable women of to-day, suggests the evils complained of are due to the unnatural restrictions by which women are denied freedom of choice in the conduct of their lives. The mediæval estimate of women, he holds, leads naturally to the reproduction of mediæval morals and manners.

The other Editorial departments are full of timely and entertaining matter in their respective fields.

*The Wheelman* for May is as full of charming incidents of bicycling as ever, indeed each succeeding number grows in interest. Besides "Wheeling," it contains poetry and stories of a high order, and is throughout ably conducted. \$2.00 a year makes it one of the cheapest, as it is one of the best periodicals published.