

THE NATURAL AND THE SPIRITUAL.

"And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal."—1 Cor. III. 1.

Easter echoes still resound in our ears. We still seem to hear the words of our special anthem—"Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord"—and therefore our thoughts may well linger over that new condition of things which has been brought about by the rising of Christ from the dead. Hitherto man has been "of the earth, earthy," but the "second Man" has come, "Who is the Lord from Heaven," Whose image we are permitted to bear. For as St. Paul teaches, in this and in other Epistle, all who have been baptized have put on Christ, have been made partakers of His new resurrection life, and thus being made "spiritual." But this does not mean that nothing further is required, and that because we have been baptized we are perfectly safe, and can live as we please. Apostolic teaching is very different from this, and any thoughtful reader of this Epistle to the Corinthians must have been struck with what seems the strange contrast between St. Paul's words in the first chapter and those in the third. In the former he writes; "Ye come behind in no gift," "waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." In the latter: "I could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal." But the explanation is simple enough, for it only discloses a state of things with which we, in this nineteenth century, are only too familiar. The act of God in baptism, by which He imparts to us a new and spiritual nature, does not do away with, or destroy absolutely, the old nature which we have inherited from Adam. The two opposing principles exist together, "for the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh," or to quote from the Ninth Article: "And this infection of nature doth remain, yea in them that are regenerated; whereby the lust of the flesh (called in the Greek *pro-nema sarkos*).....is not subject to the law of God." Hence it comes to pass that St. Paul can speak of the baptized Corinthians as being "carnal," i. e., as still living after the "natural man" spoken of in the previous chapter. But in doing so he does not question the reality of the act of baptism; he rather reproves them for their want of spiritual apprehension and spiritual progress; as on another occasion he wrote to the Galatians: "Are ye so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" If, therefore, we come across baptized persons who seem far more "natural" than "spiritual," we are not on that account to say that the connection between the regenerate, i. e., baptized man, and the spiritual man, exists in theory rather than in fact; but we should follow the course of the Apostle, and seek to stir such persons up to a due apprehension of their true standing before God, and of the terrible loss they will sustain if they fail to bring forth fruit unto holiness. There was not much evidence of the "spiritual" in the Prodigal Son, when he was found away from his home feeding swine. But our blessed Lord distinctly tells us that it was "when he came to himself" that he said "I will arise and go to my Father;" and as a son the Father welcomed him home again. Reading this parable in the light of the Epistle, we can see clearly that our blessed Lord was setting forth the case of a baptized person who for a time failed to live as such, but yielded to the temptation of the "natural man," and was "carnal," living after the flesh.

And failure in living in harmony with that

true spiritual condition wrought in baptism is evidenced in other ways than in gross sin, for St. Paul says, "for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal and walk according to man?" And for this reason he "could not speak unto them as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal." But if, on the other hand, we see persons outside the ordinances of the Church living holy lives and in charity towards all men, and thus setting Christians an example they may well follow.—what is that but an illustration of what our blessed Lord spoke of in His days, when He said, "I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel." In saying this he did not call in question the peculiar relation of the Jews to God; neither does the existence of holy lives outside the Church throw doubt upon the value of baptism, nor prove that the same condition can be attained without it.

The centurion's faith did not make him a Jew, or admit him into the Jewish privileges; neither do the faith and love of Quakers make them partakers of baptismal grace, in whatever other way God may acknowledge their faith in Him.

The more clearly, therefore, we apprehend the new spiritual condition into which God has admitted us by baptism, the better prepared shall we be to receive further grace and light through all the ordinances of God's house; and we shall with greater longing desire the perfect manifestation of Resurrection Life in the one Body at the appearing of the Lord Jesus, Who is the Resurrection and the Life.—A. B. C., in *The Family Churchman*.

EFFEMINACY IN RELIGION.

At the Wakefield Synod, of which we gave a short report last week, the question was discussed whether it was desirable to include women in the Diocesan Conference, or to allow them to vote for representatives in that body. On the one hand it was alleged that the signal service which women render to the Church demand some such recognition, while on the other hand, the Bishop and the two Archdeacons—one of them a High Churchman, the other a Low Churchman—were opposed to anything of the kind. The Bishop, in particular, very strongly urged the danger of Church work becoming too feminine. We may well ask whether there are any signs of this danger to which Dr. Walsham How alluded, and if so, how we may best guard against it. Woman has ever been to the fore in all matters of religion and philanthropy since the day when three women were found at the Cross of Christ, and all the disciples but one had cowardly fled. It is not a matter for surprise that women are more favourably disposed towards religious impulses than men; for their very habits of life enable them to attend to works of charity, and to be present at Divine Service when menfolk have to be hard at work bread-winning. Women also are more easily led than men; for the latter have to battle with the world, and are accustomed to take responsibilities on their shoulders every day of their lives, while women, in many cases, know nothing of this. It must, moreover, be confessed that men, by reason of their contact with the world, very commonly have their finer perceptions of religion blunted by the wordly tone of those with whom they mix. Woman, on the other hand, is regarded as the more delicate plant of the two, and as such, is shielded from the ruder blasts which go to brace up the male character. There are difficulties, also, which beset the clergy in their dealings with men; for they have often to be at work till late in the evening, when the clergy are occupied with other

parochial matters, and cannot visit them; while women are generally at home and can be seen when wanted. But after all is said and done, there is no reason why religion should be too feminine.

What we fear the Bishop of Wakefield hinted at was the tendency which exists among the clergy to allow some or all of these hindrances which we have spoken of to have a preponderating influence upon their parochial work. If the men are hard to get at, all the more reason it is that the difficulty should be surmounted; and we are sure that if the same amount—not, necessarily, the same kind—of oversight which is given to the daughters of the Church were bestowed upon her sons there would be no danger of religion becoming too feminine. We cannot, of course, tell what was passing in the Bishop's mind when he addressed this warning to his assembled priests; but we take it that he spoke with a full knowledge of the danger which he wished to avert. A very serious responsibility is laid on every Incumbent for it very much depends upon him whether his church is filled with men or whether women form the bulk of his congregation. There is a very general impression among the laity that the majority of the Clergy display all the weaker traits of the female character without any of its counterbalancing advantages. It always stirs up our righteous indignation to hear this charge made, and all the more so because we know it to be partly true. There is no earthly reason why, when a man fresh from college enters the clerical state, he should immediately become womanish, and we are glad that a large proportion of a somewhat extended clerical acquaintance is the reverse of this. A man who has distinguished himself at his University, either by rowing in his college eight or playing in his college eleven, does not usually become a milkshop when he is ordained; but we are afraid that a good many priests of all schools of thought in the Church do lose their manliness with their coloured clothes. When once this has happened, good-by to the priest's influence over the men of his flock. The women may vote him a darling, but the sterner sex will despise him. At the same time we would not have any priest brusque or rude in his manner towards women. He must never forget that he is a gentleman, and that chivalry requires him to treat all women with courtesy. But there is a medium in all things, and while he avoids boorishness, he is not to give way to softness. We believe that a woman has far more respect for the priest who is conspicuous for true manly qualities than for him who is tenderly solicitous of all her whims. The power of true sympathy is a great gift and one to be coveted, but the priest should show to all the bracing sympathy of a man, not the yielding sympathy of a woman. One of the best priests of the younger generation whom we know will never be a preacher, but he is more than diligent in parochial visitation. He has been known to wash a dirty baby in a hovel, and even trim a little girl's hat; but he played for his University at Lord's, and is idolized by the men of his parish.

But there are other reasons for this effeminacy in religion. One is the kind of sermons which are preached. Men do not want a long continuance of frothy appeals to the sentiment, but something more virile. They like to hear from the pulpit the discussion of subjects in which they are interested. If a priest does not feel himself equal to grappling with the intellectual difficulties of the age—possibly he could if he gave himself the trouble—he can at least be *au courant* with the topics of the day, and may find in his daily newspaper illustrations of the subjects upon which he desires to instruct his people on the Sunday. Men do not object to have sound doctrine placed dogmatically before them, so it be done with discretion and made intelligible to them; for the Word of