RELIGIOUS.

Sermons and Services Yesterday.

Man's Duty to His God, to His Neighbors and to His Country.

LIVELY LESSONS ON ORTHODOX TOPICS.

The Worship of God on Land and Water.

Discourses by Drs. Hepworth and McSweeney, Rev. Messrs. Beecher, Richardson, Frothingham, Pullman and Others.

There seems to be a lack of what might be called sensational topics for sacerdotal comment just at present. The late elections have now become things of the past; the complications in Europe seem to be, for the nonce, forgotten, and the clergy must fall back on the old, tried and never failing source of inspiration—the Divine Word. This state of affairs seemed to prevail yesterday to a great extent in the churches. The peculiarly wintry looking weather, no doubt, frightened some of the timid worshippers, but the sharpness of the atmosphere seemed to sharpen the preachers, and the sermons, therefore, although for the most part orthodox, were clear and pungent, as may be seen from the following reports.

NEW ENGLAND CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

First Sermon by Rev. Merrill Richardson After His Installation as Pastor—Eloquent Discourse on the Design of Preaching—Original Sins and Sins Not Original—The Stumbling Blocks of Doctrines.

At the neat and elegant New England Congregational church, corner Madison avenue and Forty-seventh street, which, although one of the youngest in the great sisterhood of our metropolitan churches, has already attained the full dignity of majestic maturity, there was the usual large congregation at the services yesterday morning. The steady growth of the attendants at this sacred temple of worship attests more than anything else can the growing popularity of its newly chosen pastor, Rev. Merrill Richardson, who conducted the exercises. Though the congregation is composed mainly of the representative culture and refinement of New England, there is nothing clannish either in its organization or management, nothing proscriptive. The doors of the church are open to all, and with a minister of such a forcible power of logic and eloquence as its present pastor, thronging crowds are sure to pass through the doors and fill the pews and aisles. His sermon yesterday was of unusual power—a seeming new inspiration from his recent installation on last Wednesday. The subject was "The Design of Preaching," and the

SCOPE AND OBJECTS OF PULPIT MINISTRATIONS,

or rather what in his view they should be, were most clearly, pungently and eloquently set forth. The basis of

THE SERMON

was the text First Corinthians, xiv., 8.—"If the trumpet gives an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself for the battle?" Paul, he began, was here considering the method and object of preaching. How could they be built up in the truth if that truth was not clearly uttered? This comparison was well chosen. The duty of the trumpeter was well known; not an officer or private must mistake its meaning. The safety or peril of the army depended upon it being rightly understood. Carrying out this comparison and applying it to preaching, he insisted that the great design of preaching was to build men up in the truth of God and thus fit them for His kingdom. His first point was that revelation is a system of truth which the preacher should understand. If

THE BIBLE IS OF GOD

then, like nature, all its truths will harmonize. There will be no contradictions. God is exact. He referred to the perfect system marking the regulation and movements of the planetary world to show this exactness. A few years ago astronomers were all agog, thinking

THERE WAS SOMETHING WRONG

and irregular in the movements of the heavenly bodies. They pointed their telescopes skyward, seeking to penetrate the mysteries of those far away worlds. The result was the discovery of a new planet—the discovery that all was still harmonious in those myriad worlds; also

Singing forever as they shine
The hand that made us is divine.

Yes, this was the great song of the stars. There is no chance in God's universe. This point was most eloquently illustrated in a variety of ways by referring to the wondrous works of nature in every department of creation. God's book of nature was open to all. It was so with the Bible. Rightly interpreted—and this was the second point of his discourse—the Scriptures give no uncertain sound. The greatly important point was for the minister to rightly interpret the Scriptures; to give forth in his teaching no uncertain sound. They must enumerate the

BIBLE DOCTRINE

rightly. This word doctrine was a great stumbling block to many. The word meant something stupendous, something vague, something mysterious. The word meant simply to teach this, and nothing more. There were doctrines in nature as well as in the Bible. He proceeded to speak of the doctrine of sin, and showed the divine sounds given forth from the pulpit on this topic. Some objected to the Bible because it was alleged to teach that man was by nature wicked and depraved. If this was sound basis of objection, what must be thought of

THE NEWSPAPERS,

in nearly all the columns of which every day are to be found records of depravity and evil doing? This matter of sin was very simple. Paul defined it as transgression of the law. This told the whole story. It is doing wrong. It is disobedience. Let the minister know this and then he can sound forth what sin is from the pulpit. He described with marked eloquence the

WEAKNESSES AMONG THE CLERGY

and in the churches upon this subject of sin. The whole great problem of life and duty as pertaining to the minister was to know what sin is and man's duty regarding it. Having finished this branch of his discourse he proceeded to speak of regeneration. This was a doctrine upon which the preacher must give a distinct utterance. It had been said that the work of regenerating a soul called forth as great display of power as to create the universe. He would leave this matter to God and

NOT BLOW ANY TRUMPET

about it. Regeneration was God's work—a mystery—and no man could fathom it. The next subject touched upon was the doctrine of divine sovereignty. He was particularly eloquent upon this point. He traced the great designs of the great Creator with an emphasis and clearness rarely seen in the pulpit. They could trust God. He

Moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform.

He was sovereign of all. He raised up nations and kingdoms and he demolished them for his own purposes. He had raised up

OUR REPUBLIC,

as he trusted, to show to the world the golden fruition of the glorious principles of freedom. From this he went on to speak of God's purposes and the connection of law and grace. He was exceedingly happy in both his arguments and illustrations upon these two points, depriving them greatly of their natural dryness and technical character. His final picture of the duties of the minister glowed with an eloquence of description as effective as it was impassioned.

"There stands the legate of the skies,
His theme divine, his office sacred, his
Credential seal'd. By him the violated
Law speaks out its thunders, and in tones as
Sweet as angels use the Gospel whispers
Peace.

In conclusion he alluded to his recent installation over the church as its pastor, and what he should aim to do and what doctrines teach in entering upon his new field of pastoral duties. He hoped, first of all, to make himself acceptable in God's sight and to preach that Gospel which Christ bade His disciples go forth and preach to the whole world. He pledged his own best efforts to proclaim abroad, to the extent of his abilities, the truths of the Bible and to call sinners to repentance. He would invite to the seats of worship the poor and lowly as well as the powerful and rich. He invoked their aid and their prayers; the rest he left to God and the future.

The sermon was listened to with the most earnest attention. It was announced that there would be a morning service in the church on next Thanksgiving Day, and then with singing by the congregation and the benediction were terminated the exercises.

TRINITY CHAPEL.

Relations Between the Rich and the Poor—Sermon by the Rev. Dr. Dix.

There was a very large attendance at Trinity chapel yesterday, and the interesting services were conducted with the usual solemnity and devotion. The interior of the edifice presented quite a handsome appearance owing to the pleasing, variegated hues of the many rich and elegant toilets that were exhibited. At half-past ten o'clock the religious exercises commenced, and a prominent feature throughout was the harmony that characterized the rendition of the numerous chants and psalms. The Rev. Dr. Dix selected his text from the Gospel according to St. Luke, xvi., 25—"But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and thou art tormented." It often happened when perusing the Scriptures, perhaps for the thousandth time, that some thought struck the reader which never occurred to him before, as it

A NEW RAY OF LIGHT

disclosed something which had previously been unobserved. In the proverb of the rich man and the poor man nothing was said against the rich man's character in malice. The case was that of one who had great wealth and enjoyed it; who lived handsomely and who had no thought of his poorer brethren. He dwelt in statelliness and comfort, and clad himself in soft apparel. Moreover, he passed his time in luxurious ease. It was not said that he was unkind to Lazarus, but that he simply forgot him. The poor man might sit outside his gate so long as he desired. Indeed, he might have frequently received what he asked in the way of scraps and crumbs that fell from the splendid feast inside, but otherwise he was overlooked and forgotten. Now, it was apparent that such a state of things must necessitate a change in the appointed order of events. It seemed that the parable mentioned in the Gospel was intended as a lesson showing that there was a great law, made by a just and righteous God, in reference to the relations between the rich and the poor. That seemed to be the scope of the parable. It was plain that

NO FAIR-MINDED MAN,

looking at the world and observing the superabundant comfort of the rich and the deep, dark miseries of the poor, could feel that things are as they should be. Everybody must admit that there was something wrong somewhere, and, the facts being admitted, it followed that a change of some kind was sure to come. The reverend gentleman then gave a very eloquent illustration, suggested by practical experience, of the great contrast between the palaces of the rich and the hovels of the poor. He had visited both, and the vast difference presented clearly manifested to his mind that sooner or later some great change must take place. The mansion of the rich man was resplendent in all its luxuriousness; the misery of the poor basement, many feet below the level of the street, which he subsequently entered, was frightful in the appearance of desolation and penury which it exhibited. Both houses with their separate stories—good things here, evil things there. No rich man could look on two such pictures and admit that things are as they should be, and if he remembered the words of the parable he must feel uneasy. He must say to himself that a change must come; that indifference to the wants of the poor is a crime, and that

CRIME MUST HAVE RETRIBUTION.

After forcibly dilating on the very marked and striking contrast existing between the different portions of mankind, the reverend gentleman adverted to the theory of disbelief advanced by infidels, contending that it was appalling when such questions as those mentioned were brought to mind. No infidel could confidently put forward his assertions and be cognizant of the difference existing between the rich and the poor. The fact was now apparent that more light was wanted on a dark question. Having referred at length to the erroneous and irrational ideas entertained by socialists, he impressed upon the congregation the necessity of comprehending the contrast existing between the wealthy class and those suffering from poverty and destitution. But it was consoling, under all the circumstances, to think that throughout his life on this earth the Lord had always favored the poor and advocated their claims. Dr. Dix concluded an eloquent and argumentative discourse by urging on the wealthy portion of the community the importance of recognizing the position of the poor. The services were then continued and terminated shortly after twelve o'clock.

ST. PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL.

Sermon by the Rev. Dr. McSweeney—"The Necessity of a 'Last Judgment.'"

The Rev. Dr. McSweeney delivered the sermon at the Cathedral yesterday. He took for his text the twenty-fourth chapter of St. Matthew, from the fifteenth to the thirty-fourth verse. The necessity of a "last judgment," he said, commends itself to every reasonable mind. Even though there were no prophecy of the great event laid down in the gospel, we ourselves, enlightened by our own good sense, would be able to prophecy that such a thing must necessarily occur; for if there is a God He must be a just God. If He was not just then He was not a real God; but reason told us that the God we adore is a God who made us, who will reward the good and punish the wicked—a God of infinite justice, with whose justice no one can find fault, to whose justice no one can be blind. During this life it very frequently happens that the enemies of God prosper. They are men who deny His justice, even His very existence, and endeavor to prove it by facts which, to the ignorant mind, seem quite plausible. The blasphemer acquires a kind of right to vomit forth

THE MOST HORRIBLE BLASPHEMIES

against God, because to human minds, limited as they are, certain things done in this world are not reconcilable with the justice of God. The wicked are not always known. How often do they wear a mask of piety, not only for a few years, but for a long lifetime, when in their hearts they are impious and blasphemers. This must be set right. The wicked cannot go forever unpunished; for if they did the moral universe would get out of joint. In this is the completeness of the doctrine of Jesus Christ. He condemns the blasphemer, but at the same time justifies the condemnation. Many things done in this world are unexplainable, but it should be remembered that there is a reckoning day to come when all the hills would be laid low, the valleys filled and the

CROOKED WAYS MADE STRAIGHT.

How often do we find from the instructions of the Church and even from our own little experience in life that the surest sign by which to distinguish the virtuous from the impious is their condition in the world. The virtuous are deprived of temporal goods, and they seem to receive no reward for their good acts. Look at the myriads of saints in the early history of the Church who suffered and died rather than yield up their faith. So accustomed has the world become to witnessing the wicked prosper and the virtuous suffer in life that wonder is excited when the contrary happens; in fact, we have got into the habit of discerning between the good and the bad simply by looking at what the one has and the other has not in worldly goods. So accustomed are we in seeing the justice of God disregarded that we lean to the belief that

NOBODY HAS A RIGHT TO BE RICH

and well to do but the wicked. The last judgment would set all this right. Then would God's justice be vindicated and the wicked be known for what they are and punished for what they are. God must punish the wicked in the end in order to vindicate His justice and to show the infinity of His mercy. He will pronounce the sentence of "Depart from me, ye wicked, to everlasting fire," and no lapse of time will ever satiate His divine vengeance. How could this be reconciled with God's mercy. He would make pass in array before His throne these creatures condemned for all eternity, and even the wicked will have to exclaim that His justice is right. Then, on that awful day, He will bring up in

TERRIBLE ARRAY AGAINST THE SINNERS

the sufferings of His divine Son, His death and the days and years during life which He gave them to avert the sentence. Men will never see the full extent of the mercies which He accorded them on earth and the hundreds of opportunities He gave them to follow the path of righteousness. Men would then learn that all in this world was but vanity except the love of the Lord and the service of Him alone. On the last day there would be no need of sermons, of examples, of sufferings, of death.

IN THE TWINKLING OF AN EYE,

when all men would fly to judgment, the lesson would be learned perfectly, conclusively, that the highest blessing of the earth was nothing in comparison with the lowest throne of the elect in heaven. Then will they look back and see the folly of the sacrifices they made for the world. But it will be too late, for doomsday is not called the day of the Lord because it will be a day of mercy, but because it will be a day of justice.

The reverend speaker then concluded with an earnest exhortation to the congregation to avail themselves of the present, which is the acceptable time, to do good, and thus avoid on the day of judgment the sentence of eternal death.

ATTORNEY STREET METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

A Lesson Upon the Following of Christ and Upon the Gentleness of His Life—Sermon by Rev. S. P. Swift.

The congregation at this church yesterday, though not large, seemed thoroughly devout. There was no display of gaudy dresses and no attempts at rivalry in any form, those who attended service doing so for its moral effects. The minister was most impressive in his delivery, and as the sacred words fell from his lips it was easily to be seen how deeply his hearers appreciated them. The text was from St. Matthew, iv., 19—"He saith unto them follow me." Upon the following of Christ, said the minister, men are apt to disagree, and there are none who boldly and fearlessly follow Him. One says, I shall follow Christ by praying on Sunday; another by this act, and another by that; but this is not the true way.

TO FOLLOW CHRIST

as He desires we must give up all selfish motives. there is no act in life in which if we desire we cannot in some way imitate Him. Praying alone is not following the divine teachings of the Master; the giving of a loaf of bread to the poor and needy has salvation in it. Let us look upon the meekness and gentleness of Christ while on earth and try how near we can resemble Him; let us look at His charities, at the kindly and brotherly manner in which He approached all who earnestly called on Him. Christ could by speaking the word as easily heal the sick; but He preferred to do more; He preferred to lay his hands in love and kindness upon them, to teach them to be gentle, tender and charitable, as His Father in Heaven had taught him to be. The pastor exhorted his hearers to ponder upon these things and to struggle manfully to imitate them; this, he said, was the only true way to follow Christ; make no special point in which to be like Him, but be meek, lowly and charitable and follow Him in all things. God, he said, did not care for

SCHOLARLY WORDED PRAYERS.

He wanted the humble outpourings of a truly penitent heart. He thought that some men had an idea that beautifully worded prayers would pave a road to heaven; but such was not the case. The penitent heart must dictate the prayer we wish the Father to hear and answer. As an instance of this he referred to Christ's Sermon on the Mount, in which the true course we are to follow is so plainly and yet so simply laid down. He earnestly requested those present to cast aside their selfish and worldly ways and to take up the cross and follow Christ as He has so pleaded for us to do, to follow Him boldly and fearlessly; follow Him in the face of all obstacles and in spite of the taunts of men, never for an instant swerving from the purpose, but to go onward and upward, that in the end we might have the eternal rest that has been promised to those who, on that great day that must come, shall be found worthy followers of Him who set us so fine an example. Let all earnestly and humbly invoke the blessing of God upon his efforts to be like the Saviour. Work and pray for the strength of His grace and loving kindness to assist us in imitating the Redeemer of mankind.

The sermon throughout was most impressive, and at its close the pastor delivered a beautiful prayer that accorded most perfectly with his discourse.

AMERICAN FREE CHURCH.

The Church of Christ and "the Synagogue of Satan"—Second Death and the Crown of Life—Grand Contrast—Lecture by the Rev. Charles B. Smyth.

Another expository lecture in the course of the Book of Revelations was delivered yesterday by Rev. C. B. Smyth, at the Masonic Hall, Thirteenth street. The reverend gentleman, in commenting upon the reverses and disappointments which every day beset mankind, and comparing the rich man going to heaven to a camel striding through the eye of a needle, introduced some forcible illustrations, which evidently made a deep impression on the congregation. After some preliminary observations Mr. Smyth selected his text from Revelations ii., 8-11:—"And unto the angel of the church at Smyrna write: These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive; I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty," &c. This passage constitutes the letter to the chief member of the seven churches of Asia. Smyrna, in which the church was situated, was, as it is now, an important city of Asia Minor, about forty miles from Ephesus. The person represented as speaking is Christ. The expression "the first and the last" denotes the eternity of His Divine nature, and the term "which was dead, and is alive" refers to the human, which had been crucified and afterwards raised from the dead. When it is here said that Christ "is alive" much more is meant than that He is now

SOMEWHERE IN A STATE OF CONSCIOUSNESS

and activity. The words, death and life, are commonly employed with reference to this earth. One is dead when he ceases to be interested in this world by the separation of the spirit from the body; he is alive when he is interested in the affairs of the world; so Christ is alive, not only in the sense of His spirit having become reunited to His body in His resurrection, but in that of taking an active interest in the affairs of this life. He is as much concerned now in the events which are taking place as He was when visible by his bodily presence among the Jews. This sense of the term is very appropriate in view of the next clauses following:—"I know thy works," &c., "and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews and are not," &c. Knowledge and life are intimately connected, and that a knowledge of

CURRENT EVENTS.

No person is truly and fully alive who is not informed of the occurrences which are taking place around him, or who does not take part in them as one who is involved therein. In this enlightened age, when facilities for acquiring knowledge are so numerous, and the daily record of transactions is within the reach of all, he must be dead in ignorance and apathy who does not know the news of current events. And if Christ is alive to these things why should not His people be, who profess to comprehend in some degree the meaning of His kingdom and the bearing of passing events upon its welfare?

After dwelling at some length on the importance of being, like Christ, alive to the transactions taking place every day around us, and

AFFECTING HIS KINGDOM

(as all movements do in a greater or less degree), the speaker drew a line of demarcation by which he separated the people of the world, no matter to what church or sect any of them might belong, into two grand classes, as indicated by the contrast presented in the text between the members of the Church and those of

THE SYNAGOGUE OF SATAN.

The only distinction, he said, that will be recognized between men in the day of judgment will be between those who serve God and those who serve Satan. No preference will be shown then to the members of one church above those of any other; but every person will be judged according to his works. The tenth verse represents Satan as the great agent in bringing persecution and tribulation upon the children of God; but he could not prevail against them. In the closing clauses of this passage

A DECIDED CONTRAST

is exhibited, he said, between the future of the faithful and that of the unfaithful. To the former Christ will give "a crown of life," but the latter will be subjected to "the second death."

In referring to this last passage Mr. Smyth called forth all his energy and wonted eloquence, and dilated at considerable length upon the inevitable destruction of those who wandered from the narrow path and strayed into the wide walks of sin and vice, thereby depriving themselves of that "crown of life" which had been promised them.

LEXINGTON AVENUE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

Self-Satisfied Christians Stirred Up—Sermon by the Rev. R. M. Stratton.

A large and respectable audience filled the above fashionable church, situated on Lexington avenue and Fifty-second street, yesterday. The ordinary number of worshippers was augmented no doubt by an advertisement in the papers that the pastor would preach on "The Regions Beyond." Numbers of Christians imagined that this referred to our after existence, and consequently came with a common curiosity to see what the other world would be, thinking that they would be wafted on the wings of boundless ministerial eloquence alternately to the realms of heavenly bliss and the fathomless depths of

INCOMPREHENSIBLE DAMNATION.

Great was their disappointment on finding that the terms "regions beyond" applied to the fields of missionary teachings, and not to our aerial existence in a future sphere. The sermon was preached in aid of the Methodist missionaries now prosecuting their work in all quarters of the globe. The reverend gentleman's eloquence was singularly well adapted for such a discourse, appealing to the charitable sympathies of his congregation with a wonderful depth of feeling, bringing home his arguments, and strongly portraying the glorious results of charity.

The pastor took his text from Second Corinthians x., 16—"To preach the gospel in the regions beyond you, and not to boast in another man's line of things made ready to our hand." These were the grand principles held by the apostles, instilled into them by our Saviour and handed down to us to guide us in our ministerial and missionary capacities. The apostles were not satisfied merely to preach the word to the same congregation, like ministers now-a-days; they went abroad everywhere, preaching and teaching;

THEY LOST NO OPPORTUNITY

of doing good. In those early days of Christianity of course followers of Christ had to work harder and suffer more than in the present age. They led lives of trusting faith in the good work they were engaged in—ceaselessly active, and seldom or ever deviating from the course they had chosen for themselves. Led on and upheld by the greatest itinerant preacher that ever lived, Jesus Christ, they entered heart and soul into teaching the Gospel, and firmly established that basis of Christianity on which to-day we so firmly stand. What a noble example have our missionaries always before them! What an honor to think that theirs is the profession adopted by the Saviour of His people! Well, indeed, have the noble men of our time done their work; for, behold, at this moment, in every land known on the globe, they are at work. Their lives, indeed, resemble that of our great Master—beaten to-day, stoned to-morrow, massacred in China, eaten up by cannibals.

THEIR BONES LIE BLEACHING ON EVERY SHORE.

From Africa's desert plains to India's rocky mountains and Iceland's frigid zone have the voices of our missionaries been heard, breathing the spirit of the word of God given to us 1,800 years ago. This is precisely the type of man that Christ chose when he took the twelve apostles—men who were willing to go anywhere and do everything for His cause, even to lay down their very lives. Now in the eyes of God we are all missionaries—all this vast assembly I see before me—and how are ye fulfilling God's wishes when He has appointed you to such a position? Do not imagine that to save your souls nothing is to be done except come to church regularly and listen to a sermon with praiseworthy complacency. That is a selfish Christianity which will not do. If by putting with commendable regularity a ten cent stamp on the plate you imagine that it goes to purchase

A THROUGH TICKET TO HEAVEN

you are laboring under a most grievous delusion. It is necessary for salvation that parties calling themselves Christians should lead lives of "ceaseless activity," always laboring in the Lord's cause and aiding to spread his great and glorious word to all nations even as it has been spread to ourselves. While charity always begins at home it should not stay there. I try to love all my fellow beings in the world; but if there is any man whom I hate it is the stingy man, wrapped up in himself, never aiding or assisting a fellow creature, thinking of no one and caring for none except himself. It is right that we should take care of erring Christians at home in this our own land, where tens of thousands land on our shores every week, burdened with the superstitions of Catholicism, but I verily believe that God would curse us were we to neglect those races living in darkness and barbarity, when he tells us "Go forth and preach the Gospel to all nations."

CHURCH OF THE MESSIAH.

Discourse by the Rev. George H. Hepworth on "Moral Courage."

At the Church of the Messiah last evening the Rev. George H. Hepworth, the pastor, preached before the usually brilliant and numerous congregation, taking "Moral Courage" as the subject of his remarks.

Mr. Hepworth's text was taken from Matthew xxvi., 74:—"Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man." He said:—My subject this evening is "Moral Courage," and though I may address myself more particularly to those who are just entering upon their careers, I am sure that my words will not be unheeded by those of riper years. The theme is perfectly and sadly illustrated by the incident which gives me my text. Almost all His other friends had forsaken the Lord. But Peter had so lately made public protestation that he would not only follow the varying fortunes of the Master, but even die with Him if necessary, that one has a right to expect some degree of heroism when it came to the pinch. When the disciples were unassailed, walking quietly along the highway, it was no difficult matter to get into an enthusiastic mood, and to say things which in his heart he did not really mean. But when the arrest had been made, and the

EXCITED AND UNREASONABLE MOB

called for blood and vengeance; when the testimony had all been given in, and it became certain the verdict of guilty would be pronounced, and the terrible sentence of death executed, it was a very different matter to share the Master's fate. Peter was a false friend. He could well afford to be brave when bravery cost nothing; but when the price to be paid was nothing less than life itself he shirked his duty, and abandoned his Lord. What a contrast here between the Prisoner at the bar and the man who was in the kitchen talking with the servants! Christ offered no apology and made no defence. Undoubtedly He could have used to achieve his own freedom the same wondrous power which bade Lazarus come forth, and the sheeted dead obeyed; but He crushed down the instincts of His human nature and without a murmur submitted not only to the sentence of the court, but also to the base insults of the crowd. The question comes up, How did He do all this? How did He meet his fate so boldly? How could he be calm, patient and enduring in the midst of that terrible suffering and the excitement of the populace? The answer is on my lips. It was because He could trust the love of God more than He could fear the hatred of men. To Him God was not a theological vision, but an almost visible and ever-present Father. He felt that duty called, and when it did call He heard nothing else. If He could only feel that He was right He could endure anything.

THE MOB WAS NOTHING

to Him, and little cared He what it could do; the so-called court of justice was nothing; duty and God were everything. Now, that is what I mean by moral courage. Let me define the words. A man may be very brave and yet not have a speck of moral courage. A brave man under tremendous excitement, not thinking of and not reckoning consequences, may rush into the thick of the fight, and even lead the forlorn hope. We all admire him. But there is a quality of character which ranks still higher. We see it when a man not only seeing, but reckoning the consequences to their fullest extent, calmly and deliberately suffers a wrong or a calamity because he feels it to be his duty. The young man who resists

THE TEMPTATION TO DRINK

or to gamble in the face of the sneers and innendoes of his companions, sacrificing their good opinion rather than his own self-respect and sense of what is right, is a moral hero. I sometimes think it requires more real character to say No, and mean it, than it does to expose oneself on the field of battle. Sometimes you know of a woman who is married to a brutal man—a man who has forgotten his vows at the altar—a man who is unkind to her, and who neglects his children and his home, led by that fatal thirst which endangers everything, but who shields her husband's faults from the rude gaze of the world, bears his insults without a murmur, and still strives to see the good in him, and, by loving artifices, to draw him back to his former and better self. There are many such romances in our daily social life. If I could

UNROOF YOUR HOUSES

and your hearts, I should find more exciting scenes than were ever told in story and I should discover a heroism, a moral courage which is known only to God. The power to do one's duty without asking the world's permission is the true indication of the Christian. You can make this moral courage your own only by making the moral facts out of which it comes your own. If you half believe in God, in immortality, in Christ, then you waver; but if heaven and duty are solemn realities, which take precedence of everything else, then you are not the slave of public opinion; you are a freeman of God. You can do what is right and leave the rest to Heaven. I need not tell you how much we all need this quality which I call moral courage. It is the shield of the young, it is the fortress of the middle aged, it is the comforter of the aged.

CHURCH OF THE HOLY TRINITY.

Public Piety Cooled Down—Coming to Make Love and Forgetting to Pray—A Railroad Nuisance—Who Was Jesus Christ?—Sermon by the Rev. Mr. Tracy.

Yesterday could hardly be regarded as a good day for religion in and around Fifth and Madison avenues; for the godly of that brown stone region have not yet secured their fashionable supply of winter clothing, and to encounter the biting blast of yesterday in summer costume would be a piece of fun and folly only fit for some

OVERHEATED ST. ANTHONY

of the period. It would be out of the question altogether to think of putting on last winter's old-fashioned apparel, and the only alternative was to keep within doors and leave the churches empty. This must account for the absence of a congregation at the Church of the Holy Trinity, corner of Madison avenue and Forty-second street, at half-past three o'clock yesterday afternoon, where and when the Episcopal services were conducted and a good sermon preached by the Rev. U. T. Tracy. The subject of the discourse was the identity of Jesus Christ as the Son of God. The preacher said that the art of criticism is now being cultivated to perfection. Men who formerly accepted every truth advanced without question are now grown suspicious, and must have proofs of every statement before they believe. This is true regarding every subject of human interest, and is particularly so with respect to religion. Men are questioning not only the religious faith of others, but are also examining their own and

DEMANDING PROOFS,

and if they do not receive those proofs at the hands of the preacher, whose task and duty it is to supply them, they threaten to discontinue believing all they had formerly received with implicit faith. The time has long gone by when men received religious teaching as from authority, and the more intelligent mind of to-day insists on thinking for itself on religious as well as secular affairs, and it sometimes thinks all the way down to the foundation. People are indisposed to accept anything just now on the mere assertion of a preacher. They are beginning to question the ministers. Philosophers are thinking, and they do not now keep the results of their researches all to themselves. They have contracted the custom of translating their thoughts and opinions into popular language and printing them in pamphlets and newspapers. And this thinking and reading and questioning has the effect of unsettling the mind. People say, "If we have been cherishing a delusion let us cherish it no longer." This does away with all priestcraft and renders it wholly powerless for good or evil. At such a peculiar time as this what is the duty of the religious teacher? Is it to crush the questioning spirit and

SMOTHER THE VOICE OF INQUIRY

by the force of authority? That was the old method of silencing the doubt; but that method would not work to-day. Men cannot now trample on their doubts so easily by a mere effort of the will. We cannot nowadays regard the honest doubts and suspicions of our fellow men as crimes to be punished for. Doubts are not necessarily wicked. They cannot be helped and are no more the result of volition than the circulation of the blood. The duty of the minister, therefore, is to answer the questions, to supply the proofs demanded and so dissolve the doubts. Wisdom and justice call upon them to let in the light. It is their place to bear the burdens of the weak and solve the doubts of the troubled in spirit. There is a proportion of intelligent listeners in every church who think for themselves and silently demand proofs of every statement uttered, and if the preacher does not furnish them so much the worse for the preacher. There is an unlimited supply of them in

THE COMFORTABLE GOSPEL

of Jesus Christ. Religious proofs are very peculiar in their nature. Supernatural facts must be established only by supernatural evidence. The foundations of our belief are the proofs we can bring to show that Jesus Christ was really the Son of God, and not a mythical personage. The biographers of Christ have given us only a very imperfect notion of what He was. There is no positive proof of His divinity to be found in His miracles; but the character of Christ was divine. The image of His Father was stamped upon Him. The Father Himself is the witness who testifies in behalf of His Son.

It was a pity the eloquence of the preacher was not rewarded by the presence of a larger audience, and even the few who attended did not appear to be appreciative. A young lady sat, with her beau, right in front of the reporter, and whenever a prayer was uttered, and the congregation went through the form of kneeling, this pious couple took

A MOST UNGODLY ADVANTAGE

of the "situation" to do some warm love-making. A little way back another pair were similarly engaged all through the sermon. Another disadvantage under which the minister labored arose from the Fourth avenue cars, which turn a corner into Madison avenue at this point, and every time a car passes the grating of the wheel flanges against the bent rail makes a frightful screech that shakes all the nerves in the church and neighborhood.

ST. STEPHEN'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH.

The Efficiency of the Sacrament of Penance—Sermon by the Rev. John Hawley, of St. Johns, Newfoundland.

There was no diminution in the usually large congregation which attends St. Stephen's Roman Catholic Church at the half-past ten o'clock mass yesterday morning. Dr. McGlynn, pastor of the church, ascended the pulpit after the Gospel and announced that Archbishop McCloskey had directed that on Thanksgiving Day mass would be celebrated in all the churches throughout the city at the same hour as on Sundays. He also stated that the forty hours' devotion would commence next Sunday, and exhorted his hearers to take part in that most beneficial devotion. All possible facilities, he said, would be afforded during its continuance for hearing the confessions of the devotionists.

The Rev. John Hawley, of St. Johns, Newfoundland, then proceeded to preach the sermon of the day, the text of which he took from the first chapter, twelfth to fourteenth verse, of St. Paul's Epistle to the Colossians:—"Giving thanks unto the Father which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; who hath delivered us from the power of darkness and hath translated us unto the kingdom of His dear Son, in whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sin." In another week, said he, the Church will celebrate the advent of our Lord, although Christ once dead shall not die again, and having come on earth once shall not again return. We are called upon to

PREPARE FOR THE DAY OF JUDGMENT.

The gospel of this day gives an awful picture of that terrible day when God in all his glory and attended by the heavenly hosts shall come to mete out to each one his desserts. To the good he shall say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, come and possess the kingdom prepared for you even from the beginning of the world." But to the sinner his wrathful words shall be, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire."

The preacher then went on to state that Christ had left on earth the means by which the day of judgment would cease to be a terror. To His disciples he left the power of forgiving sin, which they had handed down to their successors, the ministers of religion. There is no power of forgiving sin except that which comes from God. St. Paul says there can be no remission without the shedding of blood. In the old law the blood of calves was sacrificed, but this would not avail to salvation. The blood which was spilled on Calvary hill alone sufficed to redeem mankind. And how is this to be applied to our souls? Has our Lord established any tribunal to bring His Son's blood in contact with our souls? Christ Himself says, "As the Father has sent me so I send you," &c. Behold the connecting link between Calvary and the soul of man, in the sacrament of penance.

GOD ALONE CAN FORGIVE SIN,

but He has invested his priests with that same power, not only of releasing from sin, but also of binding. Christians should embrace this means of freeing themselves of their burdens with joy. The first murderer, Cain, did not confess his guilt, but became an outcast from his fellow men, and gave himself up to despair. Even for the sin of Judas there would have been forgiveness if he had only gone to that Saviour whom he had betrayed, and, confessing his sinful crime, expressed his sorrow for it. The work of the Redeemer would have been incomplete without this tribunal of penance. What a feeling of happiness one experiences after partaking of its healing influences! The penance which the priest imposes is

MORE EFFICACIOUS THAN ANY OTHER PRAYER,

and ascends to the throne of God to intercede for the sinner who has quitted the confessional. The effect of this sacrament on society is very beneficial; and, had it no other results, this alone would make it desirable in elevating the public morals. In conclusion, Father Hawley said that the sacrament of penance was the best means of opening our hearts to God, and urged the congregation to make use of it during the devotions of Advent.

The part of the mass which appeals to the sense of hearing—the music—and raises the thoughts to the heavenly choir, which each one hopes to enjoy the happiness of hearing, was unusually brilliant.

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF THE HOLY TRINITY.

The Duty of Christians to God and to the Government—Sermon by Rev. G. F. Krotel, D. D.

At the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Holy Trinity, on West Twenty-first street, the congregation were instructed in their duty to God and to the civil authorities in a very interesting sermon preached by their pastor, the Rev. Dr. G. F. Krotel. He preached from the twenty-second chapter of St. Matthew, in which Christ says, "Render, therefore, unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things which are God's." Said he, Christ recognizes the right of civil authority, and admits that the government has certain claims and requirements on citizens, and it is as solemn a duty to render to the civil authorities obedience in temporal matters as it is to obey God in spiritual affairs. Dr. Krotel read from

THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION,

articles sixteen and twenty-eight. The former treats of civil affairs, and holds that concerning civil affairs they teach that such civil ordinances as are lawful are good works of God; that Christians may lawfully bear civil office, sit on judgments, determine matters by imperial laws and other laws in present force; appoint just punishments, engage in just war, act as soldiers, make legal bargains and contracts, hold property, take an oath when the magistrates require it, marry a wife or be given in marriage. They condemn the Anabaptists, who forbid Christians these civil offices. They condemn also those that place the perfection of the Gospel not in the fear of God and in faith, but in forsaking civil offices, inasmuch as the Gospel teaches an everlasting righteousness of the heart. In the meantime it does not disallow order and government of commonwealths or families, but requires especially the preservation and maintenance thereof as of God's own ordinances, and that in such ordinances we should exercise love. Christians, therefore, must necessarily obey their magistrates and laws, save only those where they command any sin, for then they must rather obey God than men. Article 28 speaks of

ECCLESIASTICAL POWER,

and says—The ecclesiastical power hath its own commandment to preach the Gospel and administer the sacraments. Let it not by force enter into the office of another; let it not transfer worldly kingdoms; let it not abrogate the magistrates laws; let it not withdraw from their lawful obedience; let it not hinder judgments touching any civil ordinances or contracts; let it not prescribe laws to the magistrate touching the form of republic. As Christ says—"My kingdom is not of this world;" and again, "Who made me a judge or a divider over you." And St. Paul says—"The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God, casting down imaginations," &c. In this way do our teachers distinguish between the duties of each power due from the other and do warn all men to honor both powers and acknowledge both to be

THE GIFT AND BLESSING OF GOD.

The preacher further explained that Christians should not render to the civil authorities that which belongs to God, nor to God what is due to the civil authorities, nor to confine all their time to one, but to separate it in such a manner that neither should be neglected. Dr. Krotel continued at much length, and concluded by expressing the hope that his hearers would follow the directions he had laid down for their guidance and would render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things which are God's.

CHURCH OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL.

The Day of Judgment and the Second Coming of Christ—Sermon by the Rev. Father Mautonet.

A clear, blue sky; a fine bracing atmosphere, allied with the hunger for admiration, forced many of the gay birds of fashion, in their variegated plumage, from their comfortable nests on yesterday at an early hour. The announcement that the decorations of the above mentioned church had been brought to completion doubtless had the effect of drawing such a large, fashionable congregation within its hallowed precincts. An unusually large number of the Françaises assisted at the divine services of yesterday, perhaps through devotion, perhaps through the curiosity of viewing the new improvements worked in the interior aspect of the edifice, or, mayhap, through the desire of attracting admiration.

After the gospel the young and impassioned preacher, Father Mautonet, ascended the pulpit. He read for his congregation