RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCE.

MARCH 24—PALM SUNDAY.

Religious Programme for To-Day.

HERALD RELIGIOUS CORRESPONDENCE.

Religious Notes, Personal and General.

Services To-Day.

Dr. A. R. Thompson preaches at Rutger's College chapel to-day at both services.

"The First Letter of Jesus" is the title of Rev. P. L. Davies' sermon at the Berean Baptist church this morning.

Thomas Gales Forster will tell what he knows about Spiritualism at Apollo Hall.

Bishop Snow will elucidate "The Future of the Church and the Nations" at the University.

Bishop Potter will administer the rite of confirmation at the French Church du St. Esprit, West Twenty-second street, at four o'clock this afternoon.

At Christ Protestant Episcopal church Rev. Dr. Miller, rector, three services will be given to-day and Holy Week will be duly observed each day.

Dr. Cheever preaches at the Church of the Puritans this evening.

Rev. H. D. Clark, of Illinois, discourses at both services at the Christian church.

Dr. Deems will preach at the Church of the Strangers, morning and evening.

Dr. Chapin gives free religious exercises at the Brooklyn Academy of Music this evening.

At the New England Congregational church Rev. William R. Wright, of Boston, Mass., will preach, morning and evening.

Rev. George H. Hepworth will preach in Steinway Hall morning and evening. Morning subject—"God's Will, and How to Do It." In the evening he will give the second lecture on "Our Homes."

Rev. H. D. Northrop will preach in the West Twenty-third street Presbyterian church on Sunday at the usual hours. Evening subject—"False Balances."

Rev. C. S. Harrower will preach in St. Luke's Methodist Episcopal church, Forty-first street, near Sixth avenue, to-day, at half-past ten A. M. and at a quarter to eight P. M. He will deliver the third of a series of Sunday evening sermons on "Old Truths Restated."

Rev. Dr. Osgood will preach in the St. John's Memorial church at half-past ten A. M., "The Palm of Nobility," and at half-past seven P. M., "The True Courage," a sermon to the young.

Rev. Dr. Flagg, of the Church of the Resurrection, will discourse at the Fifty-fifth Street Hall.

Rev. J. S. Willis and Rev. G. H. Hepworth will preach at the Seventeenth street Methodist Episcopal church.

The rite of confirmation will be administered this morning at St. Thomas' church.

The Right Rev. Bishop Clark, of Rhode Island, will deliver the eighth lecture in the Grace Chapel course on Sunday evening, East Fourteenth street, opposite the Academy of Music. Subject—"Did Christ Rise from the Dead?"

At the Tabernacle Baptist church Rev. J. R. Kendrick, D. D., pastor, there will be preaching morning and evening.

Rev. Hugh Miller Thompson, in Christ Church, Fifth avenue and Thirty-fifth street—morning and evening.

Rev. John H. Morison, of Newton, Mass., will preach at the Church of the Messiah—morning and evening.

Rev. Mr. Pendleton, in Fifty-third street Baptist church—morning and evening.

Rev. T. A. Hoyt, in University, small chapel, Washington square—morning.

At St. Alban's church, East Forty-seventh street, Rev. C. W. Morrill will preach morning and evening.

"Worship of the Church" will be continued by Rev. Dr. Ewer in St. Ignatius church this evening.

"Victorious in Death" is the title of an afternoon discourse by Rev. Charles F. Lee, in the Fifth Universalist church, Chickering Hall. Morning services at half-past ten A. M. Subject—"The Sunday of Palms."

At the free church of St. Mary the Virgin, West Forty-fifth street, near Broadway, this day's services (all full choral) are at half-past ten A. M., four P. M. and seven P. M. The beautiful altar at St. Mary's is now draped in black for Holy Week, and the little church bears throughout "the trappings and the suits of woe."

The Mission to the Colored People of the South.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HERALD:—

Your paper is so obviously the great channel through which the wants of the unfortunate are best made known to the generous public, that I venture to claim a place in your columns for an appeal which no one, I trust, will disregard. A scheme has been set on foot by a zealous English priest, the Rev. Herbert Vaughan, to preach the Catholic faith and morals to the colored population, the emancipated slaves of the Southern States. Many persons might, if they were wise, encourage this mission on political grounds; we will confine ourselves to its consideration with regard to charity alone. The Rev. Herbert Vaughan, a descendant of an ancient and noble Catholic family, which suffered much from its double loyalty to the Catholic faith and to the hopeless cause of the Stuarts, was moved many years ago by feelings of deep pity for the blacks settled in America. He undertook a journey to this country and to Brazil to collect funds for a missionary college, with the ulterior view of pursuing his ministry among the negroes of America. Since that time the work increased and prospered in England; a house was purchased and students brought together for this special end. The young men were trained to the most severe self-denial and the whole work of the house was performed by them, thus anticipating the many inconveniences always sure to attend the precarious life of a missionary. Three years ago the first stone of a noble college was laid by the Rev. Herbert Vaughan, near London, and the ceremony was enhanced by the presence of many ecclesiastical dignitaries, as also of all the representative Catholic nobility and talent which so adorns the mother country. Last December, as the HERALD announced, the first four missionaries of St. Joseph's Society, headed by their founder, arrived at Baltimore and began their work. They have now a church and schools in full working order, and the colored people have hailed their installation with characteristic delight. White persons are quite secondary in the eyes of the missionaries. The Africans are to have spiritual precedence in their labors, and the new catechumens are intensely proud of the fact. In return these simple people have acted with lavish generosity and plentifully supplied their "own priests" with the necessaries of life. One day seven turkeys were found in the larder at once, through the gratitude of the poor, neglected blacks. There will be, in time, other central houses established at New Orleans, at Memphis, at St. Louis, and missions from them will radiate into the country, embracing the more remote parts. The Rev. Herbert Vaughan is at present in New York, where he will remain for three or four weeks at the utmost. He will preach in favor of the mission to-day at St. Stephen's church, and, we believe, next Sunday at St. Peter's, Barclay street. On the 17th he preached for the same object at St. Paul's, Fifty-ninth street, where he is staying as the guest of the Paulist Fathers.

There are many in this city who profess great love for the colored race; let them prove it by their generosity in support of the new scheme for the good of the blacks. Since the active part has been taken by strangers, of the same race it is true as that of America, yet not of the same tradition and not bearing the same personal responsibility, let at least the passive part of co-operating with gifts, with influence, with sympathy, be eagerly accepted by those whose names stand at the head of the lists of Africa's champions. No matter what the particular form of religion may be, they must be glad to see faith and morality preached to their friends; that faith that taught true equality long before the International was heard of; that morality which, especially with regard to the mobile and passionate temperament of the African, is the only safeguard of society. There is a touching legend of old Catholic times that one of the three kings, the Magi of the East, who followed the star till it led them to the Saviour, was a negro; in old mediæval pictures he is so represented. There is a wonderful fitness in the Catholic religion for the evangelization of these races; let it have free scope in this country, and the future may yet be bright. The success of the enterprise lies in the hands of the Christian communities of this land; let them give towards this work, and let all denominations reach out to the colored race a helping hand. Let not England do America's work without help and sympathy; be it much or little, every one's mite will be welcome before the throne of the God of charity. The Rev. Herbert Vaughan and his colleagues give themselves to the work; it is the noblest gift. Let the rich give freely of their substance; it is given to them in trust for their poorer brethren. Let the poor give as freely their influence with their friends, their earnest prayers, their sympathetic enthusiasm. The press, we know, has not failed and will not fail in giving its concurrence to so good a work, and if politicians have any time left from their lucrative occupations, let them not refuse to give to the people what the people gave to them.

We confidently hope that donations will not be wanting. They may be forwarded to the Missionary, the Rev. Herbert Vaughan, at the Paulists' Convent, Fifty-ninth street and Ninth avenue. No doubt those who will hear him preach will not be able to withstand his touching appeals in favor of our colored brethren. Circulars descriptive of the work of the Missions can also be procured at the Paulists' Convent. May this apostolic labor of love prosper as much and as long as its most earnest friends, in heaven and on earth, could desire. COLUMBA.

"Body, Parts or Passions."

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HERALD:—

Sir—I have observed with pleasure that you allow discussions upon religious subjects, within certain proper limitations, in your columns. May I venture to propound a question in the hope that some among the tens of thousands of learned readers of your valuable journal may be able to answer it satisfactorily. I am a Christian man and wish to understand my faith so as to be able to "give a reason for the hope that is in me." A few days ago I was arguing with an intelligent Mormon gentleman, and in the course of discussion he said, "I could never believe in a God without 'body, parts or passions,' and your own Christian Bible does not anywhere speak of such a God." I was staggered at this, for I knew at the moment of no scriptural reply wherewith to rebut his statement. At the same time I called to mind part of Article I. of the Anglican faith, which runs thus: "There is but one living and true God, without body, parts or passions," &c. This article is in substance believed by all Christians of every denomination; but what is its true meaning? The unity and eternity of God no Christian denies. But what about the following theses:—

"Without body."—Is this a fact? What does "body" mean here? If the Deity is "without body" what can he possibly be? Perhaps it may be answered, "God is a spirit." Granted. No one supposed that He had a body of flesh. If we speak of Him as "a spirit" do we not read that man has also "a spirit?" And does not St. Paul expressly state that the body "sown" is not the same as the spiritual body "raised?" Does he not infer that the eternal essence or spirit will have a tangible shape when he says, "Then shall we know, even as we also are known." In other places, too, angels and the spirits of men are spoken of as walking, singing, eating, talking, &c. Now, no sensible person supposes that the spirit after death will be only a shadow or a myth, and if this is true of one "spirit" is it not also true of the all-pervading and Eternal Spirit?

I opine that the great difference between Pantheists and Christians is that Christians believe that God is a person—a positive being, while Pantheists consider what Christians would call "the power of God," or "nature," or "the law of God" to be God himself. I do not wish to play upon words, but is it not a contradiction to state that God is "without body," and then in the same article to speak of Him as a "person?" It has ever been held that reason, without revelation, could comprehend a God (in unity); but can reason, aided by revelation and inspiration, conceive of a God without a body of some description, unless it be the Pantheistic, "God" pervading all space, but intangible—in fact, simply life or nature? Does Holy Scripture teach that God is "without body?"

"Without Parts."—We read that angels or spirits have appeared; but we know that they had parts and persons, for they evinced personal qualities, and in the Book of Genesis are even spoken of as "men," so close was their resemblance. We read also of "the eye" of God, "the hand" of God, &c., and evidently not metaphorically; for the characteristics of those members are mentioned in juxtaposition with the mention of the members themselves. Moses stated solemnly that God had passed before him, and that he saw the "binder part" of the Deity, though not his face. Did Moses lie? Christ, after His resurrection, was seen with "parts," as His own words to St. Thomas and the testimony of the Apostles prove. Now, if, as St. Paul says, when we are with Christ we shall be "like Him," and if Christ had a body, and if we hereafter are to be "raised a spiritual body," and if "God is in Christ" and "Christ is God," how can God be "without parts?" I use the word "parts" in the sense relative to a "body," and am justified, I think, by its position in the article.

"Without passions."—The article, of course, does not mean vile passions in a human sense, for no Christian ever supposed that God had such, and to state the negative would be superfluous. But are we not told that God "loves," that He "pitieth His children," nay, that God Himself is love? Do we not read that He "hates evil," and that He is "angry with the wicked?" How, then, can God be "without passions?" If so, what are anger, love, hatred? Yet that God is thus moved both Holy Scripture and "the concurrent testimony of the fathers" declare; and are not these, separate or together, the foundations of all Christian creeds? Which, then, is wrong, the Scriptures, the fathers or the article which, since the third century, has declared the Almighty One to be, not what His Word declares, but what its dogma asserts, "without body, parts or passions?"

I earnestly desire to learn "the truth." Can any of your readers cast aside prejudice and shew me "the way?" ALFRED.

The Catholic Church and Her Petty Slanderers.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HERALD:—

It would require a daily journal to be specially set apart in every city of the Union to contradict the accumulation of absurd calumnies which are continually pouring out against the Catholic Church, her priesthood and her people. Such a state of things reflects upon that American character for fairness and intelligence which heretofore has been our pride.

The New York *Times*, a British publication, however, in its issue of last Monday, has one of its characteristic attacks on the Church, in which it calls to its aid one Dreydorff, a German Jew, who pretends to give statistics of crime in different European nations and cities, stating, among other things, that in Rome there are 237 times as many chances of being murdered as in England.

Now, Mr. Dreydorff, if he ever took any statistics at all, should have had the honesty to say they were taken since the occupation of Rome by the Piedmontese government; but as he is doing up an attack on the Order of Jesus, it, no doubt, suits his purpose to leave the enemies of the Church to infer that such was the state of things previous to the invasion. If he pretended to insinuate this there is not an American or English Protestant who has ever lived in Rome who will not brand him a vile slanderer. One of Papal Rome's greatest features and attractions for strangers of every creed was the complete absence of crime and immorality. Up to September, 1870, you might have walked her streets day or night, and far beyond the walls, without meeting a solitary occasion to offend the eye or ear; deeds of violence were unknown, unless those committed by the Garibaldi agents, such as blowing up the Pope's barracks or the like.

That all this is now changed is, unfortunately, too true. Rome is no longer the haven of rest, the sanctuary of the peaceful or intellectual stranger. Vice in its most glaring form stalks hand in hand with deeds of violence, and those who year after year found there a winter home have bid it farewell forever. How can it be otherwise? We know that when the Piedmontese army entered Rome some six thousand males and females of the scum of Italy entered with it, and for some days there was no government, peaceful citizens being left to the mercies of the soldiery and the mob. This scum has been pouring in ever since, and we may judge of its quality from an editorial in the New York *Times* of the 19th of April last on the subject of "Italian Bankruptcy" and increase of crime in Italy since its unification and the suppression of religious institutions. Signor Lanza, Minister of the Interior, says the *Times*, pleads for penal laws of greater severity to suppress the crime of murder, so fearfully on the increase in His Majesty's dominions. During the years 1863-64 the number of assassinations amounted to 20,634, while during 1869-70 they show a total of 55,825. The scum of such a population, enemies of God, social order and morality thrown upon a peaceful, God-fearing city such as Rome was, can easily be imagined. The calamity is a loss to the civilized world, deplored as much by Protestants as Catholics.

The *Times*, in the same article with its Roman statistics, repeats the stale no-Popery cant about Catholic priests keeping people in profound ignorance. If Catholic priests keep people in ignorance, why are they spending so much toil and anxiety erecting noble parish schools in every quarter, both here and in Europe? Are they merely for show or amusement?

No, gentlemen of the *Times*, they are for the Christian education of youth, without which society has no safeguard and men degenerate into brute beasts.

If Catholic priests are enemies of education, why are those pioneers of civilization—the Jesuit missionaries—toiling in China, in Syria, in Africa, in the wilds of Oregon—not salaried reverends, keeping at a civil distance from the post of danger, with all the comforts of life around them, scattering tracts and Bibles with about as little good result as the circulation of so much waste paper, but men devoted to God and the regeneration of their race, toiling in the very heart of those vast countries, establishing schools, civilization and religion, fearless of danger and life, which so many of them have laid down for the honor and glory of their God? Read the following statement of Father Monnot, one of the Syrian missionaries, now in this city, of the progress of education and religion in that benighted land, most of which has been achieved in the face of persecution and death. The report is as follows:—

These missions contain upwards of 300,000 Catholics and several millions of infidels.

Missionaries and Assistants—Eighty European religious, fifty-five native Arabian school teachers, two hundred Arabian nuns, school teachers.

Principal Works—Six missionary residences, one free grand seminary and college, for all Oriental rites; three Normal schools for the training of native male and female school teachers, sixty-five free primary schools, open both to infidels and Catholics, in which more than ten thousand Arabian children are educated; a large printing house, for printing classical books and for the propagation of the faith, in all Oriental languages.

People who make stupid charges against Catholic priests should bear in mind that Catholics are not fools. They have common sense like other people, and their converts daily entering the Church come from the most educated and enlightened portion of Protestantism. They should also remember that to the Catholic monks alone are they indebted for the preservation of history, the arts and sciences and the Bible during the Middle Ages—long before printing or Protestantism was dreamed of.

All that a Catholic priest seeks to keep his people ignorant of is learning that leads to vice, a species of education somewhat popular in this progessive age.

One word more. Some weeks ago a Mr. Dexter Hawkins—who subsequently endeavored to enrich the coffers of the NEW YORK HERALD with a ten dollar bill—wantonly tried to injure his Catholic neighbors by false statements respecting grants of public money. He not only charges them with receiving money they never got, but includes institutions as Catholic which he knew were Protestant, and puts down remission of assessments granted to all religious bodies as donations. Not satisfied with this he gallantly attacks the Sisters of Charity in charge of St. Vincent's Hospital, by saying they refuse Protestant patients the attendance of their respective clergymen in time of sickness; and further, that he gave the Sisters a donation (not a ten dollar bill, we hope), all of which the Sisters emphatically deny in their card of February 25. Hawkins gave no donation, nor have the good Sisters ever refused to admit Protestant clergymen to their patients, to substantiate the truth of which they call to witness Protestant ministers themselves. "Dexterous" Hawkins should bear in mind an old proverb "Never to throw stones where you have windows of glass." St. Luke's Hospital, a Protestant institution in receipt of public moneys, will not admit a Catholic priest to attend a sick or dying patient on any pretext whatsoever.

The oft-repeated falsehood respecting the Cathedral property has been so often refuted that it would be an insult to your readers to dwell further on the subject.

All Catholics ask is truth and fair play. Liars they cannot be guarded against.

A CATHOLIC SUBSCRIBER.

"Open Slander"—Some Points for Father Damen to Ponder.

FATHER DAMEN:—

SIR—In your sermon Sunday evening, at the Church of the Holy Innocents, you said, speaking of Protestants, "They object to us because they do not understand us. They tell us that Catholics are not allowed to read the Bible. Now, you all know, this is open slander." Now, sir, I presume that you are aware that the Council of Toulouse, in the year 1229, decreed thus:—"We prohibit the laity from having the books of the Old and New Testaments." And also that the Council of Trent decreed and the decree was ratified by Pius the Fourth, March 24, 1564, "Inasmuch as it is manifest from experience that if the Holy Bible, translated into the vulgar tongue, be indiscriminately allowed to every one, the temerity of men will cause more evil than good to arise from it, it is on this point referred to the judgment of the Bishops or inquisitors who may, by the advice of the priest or confessor, permit the reading of the Bible—to those persons whose faith and piety they apprehend will be augmented and not injured by it, and this permission they must have in writing. But if any one shall have the presumption to read or possess it without such written permission he shall not receive absolution until he have first delivered up such Bible to the ordinary." This, sir, is not the "open slander" of Protestants, "who do not understand" you, but the infallible teaching of Holy Mother Church. In the year 1612 Paul the Fifth revoked all power to the priesthood to grant license for the reading of the Scriptures, and then and there wrote it a prohibited book forever. Why, sir, Pius the Seventh, to whom your fraternity owe so much for its resurrection to life, in the year 1814, after its death and burial by Clement the Fourteenth, July 21, 1773, so late as the year 1816 denounced Bible societies and Bible reading to the "lowest hell." Clement the Ninth, as you are aware, denounced the Jansenists because of their attachment to the Scriptures, and Gregory the Sixteenth, in his Encyclical of May 8, 1844, confirmed all the acts of his predecessors, and especially those of Paul the Seventh and of Benedict the Fourteenth, whose hostility to the Scriptures and its circulation among the people was without a parallel. "Moreover," said this Pontiff, "we confirm and renew the decrees recited above, delivered in former times by apostolic authority against the publication, distribution, reading and possession of books of the Holy Scriptures translated into the vulgar tongue." Now, sir, do the utterances of Protestants, with these facts, confirmatory of the Church's teachings upon this point, look like "open slander?" Is not this the fact, that you are false to the teachings of your own infallible Church, and hence fail to be true to your representation of Protestants? "But," say you, "the Bible is our bulwark, our sword and shield of defence." Sir, is this so? is it? Then, sir, living truths are falsehoods, and the past in its records is an imposition. Why, sir, is it, if your Church has so revered the Bible in the past and loves it so fully at the present, that she prohibits its reading to each and every one of her communion without a license from a priest? And why is it that to-day it stands a prohibited books upon your catalogue of prohibited books? And why is it that in countries where your Church is supreme the Bible is wholly unknown? Your own Poynter declared before the committee of the British House of Commons that "there is no English version of the Bible authorized by the See of Rome." The Douay Bible is of no authority even among Romanists, and is simply a foil upon the ignorance and credulity of the American people. "*Roma locuta est: causa finita est*"—"Rome has pronounced, and the judgment is final." Reverend sir, we are not ignorant of the devices of your fraternity.

E. S. HAMMOND.

The Controversy on the Immortality of the Soul.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HERALD:—

Having read in your issue of the 17th inst. both the article signed "Cato," and a reply to him by a "Disciple," I cannot refrain from endeavoring to convince the former of, what seems to me, the very dark views which he entertains. He attempts to prove by the Bible that the soul is not immortal, and asserts that he is "convinced that it cannot survive a separation of body and spirit." He evidently refers to the death of the body; but what does he mean by the "spirit"—that something which he acknowledges is separated from the body? And what does he mean by the "soul," which he asserts cannot survive that separation? Are we to infer that by the "soul" he speaks of that individual consciousness which makes each and every one just what they are, unlike any other, and by the "spirit" the mere breath that keeps this human machinery in motion and at death "separates" from the body, leaving all that was of the human—the conscious *ego*—to die out like the flame of a candle? What is a human being? Surely not that part alone which is formed by gross matter—animal and vegetable substances and the more subtle oxygen and carbon; for that part, the body, is changing every hour, and in seven years, we are told, we undergo a thorough transformation, and not one particle of our former bodies remains; but are we not the very same—has one experience been lost, one acquisition of knowledge vanished? No. We, this soul, this individual consciousness, still remains intact, immortal. We may go even farther than this, and say that we not only do not realize the loss of any portion of our bodies when it falls away from us gradually; but that a finger, an arm or a leg may be severed at once, and we still retain the impression that we possess a body entire. St. Paul says "there is a natural body and there is a spiritual body," and that "this mortal must put on immortality." It is this spiritual body which cannot be mutilated, the limbs of which the possessor is ever conscious of having, although the grosser matter of the natural limbs have been severed and long since returned to the elements of which they were composed. I think it was Sir Isaac Newton who remarked that "a smattering of philosophy made one an infidel, but a deeper knowledge of its truths compelled one to be a Christian." We may go far enough to see the workings of one material substance upon another; to know that we are dependent upon different forms of matter digested into the system for existence; that were oxygen denied us we should cease to be a living material being; that the beautiful clouds, which in childhood we gazed upon in such rapt wonder, thinking heaven lay just beyond, are only gray mist illumined by the sun; that the bright stars are only worlds like our own, "swinging around the circle," and that all forms of life and being may be traced back as an effect of matter governed by natural law, and so conclude that we are ourselves but a concrete form of matter, of different degrees of subtlety, which shall, by the disintegrating power of death, decompose into the different gases of which we were compounded, and "the spirit return to God, who gave it;" or, in other words, according to the Pantheistic doctrine, go out into the great ocean of spirit which surrounds all matter; that a future life beyond the grave is but a creation of the fancy, conjured up by our own longings for an immortal joy, and that heaven itself is but a myth. Such a condition of mind is certainly one of the stepping-stones which must be reached by a thinking, reasoning being who undertakes the arduous journey from the dark halls of old theology out into the glorious light of God's own truth. But let us go a little further and take note of this wonderful spirit which is evolved by the constant circling of matter—this thing which says, "I am, O God! and surely Thou must be!" this thing which loves and hates; no amount of oxygen or nitrogen or carbon, in any combination whatever, can ever love or hate—this thing which chains the lightning to do its bidding—which counts the stars and measures the distances from sun to sun—which penetrates into the very sun itself and tells us of its properties—which delves into the bowels of the earth and brings us knowledge of its formation and age—that allows its mortal body to suffer the untold agonies of martyrdom for a brief space, that the freed immortal may gain an eternal weight of glory—that looks out, over and anon, beyond, above all this turmoil and clashing, into the great here after, and cries,

> All too contracted are these walls of flesh:
> This vital warmth too cold; these visual orbs,
> Though inconceivably endowed, too dim,
> For any passion of the soul that leads
> To ecstasy—

that longs for a love it may never know this side the eternal river—that lives a life of self-abnegation and toil, dreaming beautiful dreams of a land where there is love without selfishness, music without discord, flowers that wither not, beauty without decay, and youth that shall never grow old. And who shall say that this is all a dream—that this great throbbing, longing soul shall die—that all these high hopes and heaven-born aspirations shall be quenched in death—that all earth's harsh discords shall not be resolved into one grand harmony "while the earth rolls in its cycles, orbing to a perfect world?"

Truth is God's choicest gift to man. He does not give it to the careless, the sluggish, the worldly. If He did they would not prize it; they would not keep it. It must be toiled for; it must be yearned after; it must be agonized over. Men must dig for it as for silver. It is the "pearl of great price," which he who finds does well to "sell his all and buy." And if this life were all, if after we had toiled, and yearned, and agonized to find the truth, we were suddenly called to leave this world forever, what becomes of the truth, the hopes, the aspirations which guided us? Dead! Buried with our bodies? All gone—annihilated? No! a thousand times no! "For now we see through a glass darkly; but then, face to face; now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I shall be known." B. E. WASHBURNE.

Has Man an Immortal Soul?

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HERALD:—

We understand by an immortal soul a spirit that inhabits the body of man, and which, on the dissolution of the body, will continue to exist forever, be conscious of its existence and have a perfect knowledge and recollection of all it passed through in connection with the body while alive on earth.

If man possesses such a soul or spirit it must be independent of life, and either must have existed in an unconscious state before it entered the body, or was called into existence by the Creator for the special purpose of inhabiting a particular body. What are the characteristics by which man is distinguished as a soul-possessing animal from a soulless animal? Consciousness, reason and a knowedge of good and evil are the qualities that distinguish man from the brute, and they are therefore claimed to be properties of the soul. At what time and in what manner does the soul enter the flesh? It cannot be that the father and mother, by the act of procreation, call the soul into existence, as well as they furnish the quick seed which develops the body by the operation of nature's law. A spirit is a thing which is not in nature, and cannot be called into existence by a law of nature. According to orthodox doctrine the soul is breathed into the flesh by a special act of the Creator. But at what time is this miracle performed? Does the soul exist in the embryo, or does it come into the fœtus with the first breath of life? Who will answer the question? The soul certainly must be in the body when the child is born, and remain in an unconscious state until man becomes a thinking animal.

It cannot be denied that the qualities on which we base our belief in the existence of an immortal soul—consciousness, reason, and the knowledge of good and evil—are vastly different at different stages of life. They are developed with the body and decay with the body. They are strong when the body is strong and vigorous, and weak when the body is enfeebled by sickness or age. They are mentally great or small according to the organism which sets them in motion. They may become dormant through sickness or from injuries sustained by the mechanism. They may even become apparently extinct in man, throughout his natural life, and yet at the examination of the body a soul or spirit issues forth from it, with renewed consciousness and a perfect knowledge of all things which affected the living man, even though he were unconscious of them at the time they happened! I pause for an answer to my inquiry, "Has man an immortal soul?"

Man is a creature of this world, a part of the created all, animated with the spirit that pervades all nature, and governed by nature's universal and unchangeable law. What is not in nature is not in him. The finite is the limit of man's knowledge. He cannot go beyond it. The law of nature is sufficient for all things in nature; it leads everything through its destiny—each according to its kind. It directs the seed to become a plant or a tree—an apple tree or a pear tree, according to its kind. In the lower animal it is guided by instinct; in man instinct is enlightened by reason, which directs him in the pursuit of happiness. Reason is the result of thought and experience. Thought is a secretion of the brain, which affects the nervous system and causes those feelings that give warning of what is right and wrong. Experience and the impressions received through the senses enlighten man to correct his understanding. Action is the law of life, and happiness is its aim. Happiness is within the law; the pursuit of it determines the will. If man understood the law that is in him he would find there a code of ethics more suitable to him as a man, more conducive to his happiness and better adapted to his social condition than any that has yet governed his kind. This I hope to show hereafter, if circumstances will allow. A RATIONALIST.

FORTY-FOURTH STREET SYNAGOGUE.

The Feast of Purim—The Power of Prayer—Joy and Gladness, Instead of Sorrow and Death.

The ancient Feast of Purim, which began to be observed by all orthodox Israelites yesterday, and whose observance will be continued to-day, was the theme of discourse by the Rev. Mr. Isaacs, in the synagogue in Forty-fourth street. The reformed Israelites do not pay any attention religiously to this festival; but socially they keep it, as the orthodox do, by sending presents one to another and giving a portion to the poor and the needy. Mr. Isaacs said he would not undertake to repeat the story in which the Feast of Purim originated, nor to comment very extensively on it one way or another. It had been commented on hundred of years ago. It is a time of joy and gladness, of wearing disguises and of general social mirth. An ancient Hebrew writer states that the reason why people do not wear Scriptural disguises is that nothing is said about the Supreme Being in the Book of Esther. Mr. Isaacs would not talk about Haman's wickedness, for though he was a bad man there was a power above him; but he would speak about the cause and the effect of the festival. In the times of old when Israel became high and exalted they forgot God and His great mercies and deliverances to them. When Jeshuran waxed fat he kicked. King

AHASUERUS MADE A GREAT FEAST,

to which 18,500 Jews sat down. This was a large number to sit down to one feast, but he (Isaacs) believed that if the President of the United States should give a feast in this city he could find that number of Jews to sit down to his tables. But that in itself was not and would not be wrong. The trouble arose because there was a division in the camp, and the rich held themselves wholly aloof from the poor. There was, however, one poor orthodox Jew who refused to partake of the feast of the King Ahasuerus—Mordecai by name. He knew the plans and plottings of the wicked Haman to destroy all the people of Israel scattered throughout the kingdom, and he clothed himself in sackcloth and ashes and sat at the King's gate and cried day after day. Had he desired to go into the King's presence Mordecai would not have robed himself in that humiliating way. It is said that he was one of the King's ministers, and that knowing the trouble that was coming upon his people he took this method of showing them by example how great was their danger and how important it was that they should humble themselves before God and call upon His name. Mordecai saw that there was only one way to avert the threatened danger, and that was to trust in and pray to God. He did not know how far he could depend upon Esther's influence. Her exaltation to the Queenship of Persia might have made her careless of the fate of her people.

CIRCUMSTANCES DO ALTER CASES.

But she heard that her uncle sat at the King's gate clothed in sackcloth and ashes and crying, and she sent her chamberlain to know what was the matter, and Mordecai returned answer and bade her go in unto the King, and if she failed to do it enlargement should come from another quarter, while she and her father's house should be despised in Israel and they should not escape destruction in the general slaughter. At her command the people were gathered together to fast and pray, and they all with one accord united in that petition. It matters not how much the house of Israel may be divided, in the time of sorrow and distress they are one. The moment the people put their trust in the Almighty, and not in Esther nor Ahasuerus, they were saved, and Haman, their enemy, was destroyed. But not only on this occasion, but on all occasions, God Saves His people. He will not forsake His people whom He hath redeemed for His own name's sake. He saved them in Egypt and He saved them in Shushan, and He saved them then as He saves them now, in answer to prayer. There has been always a Mordecai at the King's gate to protect the honor of Israel, often through agencies which we cannot see. There is a Mordecai sitting there now and pleading for God's people. We lost one such last week, said Mr. Isaacs, a mother in Israel—Sarah by name. She is gone to the world above. The one great lesson taught us by this narrative is that we should put our trust in God in the hour of danger and not forget Him in the time of prosperity. The result of Israel's prayer to God was that they had light and joy and gladness and honor. We have not these in our day. Many a Mendelssohn is pining away in secret for lack of a helping hand to bring him forward. The people are

DYING FOR LACK OF SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE.

They can have joy and gladness only in God and in His Word. We imbibe our instruction from habit and not from conviction. Israel was honored by the people of Persia because they stood up for a principle. But now they eat and drink and even pray with others not of our ancient faith. How can other people honor us, asked the preacher, when we don't honor ourselves?

Mr. Isaacs then gave some special advice to a young man who had just been admitted to the reading of the law, and made a few general remarks to the congregation on the importance of adhering to the ancient landmarks of faith, and not running away after the novelties of the present day, and closed by hoping that this Festival of Purim would be the harbinger of union, good will and peace among all people of Israel, and for this he earnestly prayed.

OBSERVANCE OF PURIM.

Last evening the orthodox Jews met in their respective synagogues and observed the Feast of Purim with religious ceremonies. Besides the usual Sabbath evening prayers the Megillah, or Book of Esther, was read and intoned from the beginning to the end. Several of the faithful had their parchment scrolls containing the history, which they unrolled as they read, and at certain portions of the narrative exclamations of wonder and surprise or thankfulness broke forth from the congregation. According to Talmudic authority the story was written by sacred inspiration, and, like the roll of the laws, it is copied with the utmost exactitude on vellum and is everywhere read aloud to the assembled congregations as part of the services of the day. Tradition also says that the book was written under the immediate eye of Ahasherus and incorporated with the royal records of the Persians, who, as followers of Zoroaster, would hardly have been disposed to confess the superiority of the true God. Hence the name of the Deity, according to any of His appellations, is nowhere directly expressed in the book of Esther. The spirit in which the day was instituted continues to the present day, and to-day, after an early morning service in the synagogue, there will be inaugurated a general season of social entertainments in the families of the orthodox Israelites. The young men who formerly celebrated the day with a ball to the number of two hundred kept the festival last Thursday at Delmonico's, and to-night several such entertainments on a smaller scale will be given and enjoyed throughout the city, and joy and gladness will reign abroad.

PALM SUNDAY.

To-day is Palm Sunday, celebrated by the Church in commemoration of the triumphal entry of the Saviour into Jerusalem. For the past week, since Passion Sunday, the Church has been calling to recollection the passion of Christ, but to-day she joins with the multitude in singing Hosannah as the God-man enters Jerusalem in triumph, with palms, the emblem of victory, strewn along the way. But she is not unmindful of the type of this rejoicing which occurred among the Israelites in

THE PROCESSION OF THE LAMB

which was afterward to be immolated, and blends with the joyous hailing of the King the prayers and mournful chants which should precede the scene on Calvary. The day has been celebrated from the earliest ages, though at what precise time the Church first began the blessing of the palms is uncertain. Far back as the fourth century the custom was in practice in the East and in Italy. About the seventh century it was more generally observed. It was the custom formerly, and it still is in some Catholic countries, to form a procession, which would proceed through the town, a cleric or layman in some instances being mounted on an ass, to represent the Saviour, while in others the Eucharist or the Bible would be carried before the people. In England, before the Reformation, there were many customs peculiar to the day, but these were all abolished or fell into disuse in the reign of Edward the Sixth. There still exists, however, at Caistor, Lincolnshire,

A CURIOUS CUSTOM.

A man representing the owner of the Broughton estate goes into the porch of Caistor church during the reading of the first lesson and cracks a "gad whip" three times, and then takes a seat in the church. During the second lesson he approaches the minister, holding upright the whip, which has now at its upper end a purse containing thirty pieces of silver. Kneeling before the minister he waves the whip three times around his head, and continues kneeling until the end of the lesson, when he retires. The origin of this custom is unknown. In Rome to-day the ceremonies of the blessing of the palm will be on the grandest scale. The Pope, with his cardinals, bishops, priests and attendants, is at St. Peter's to bless the palms and head the procession which commemorates that at Jerusalem. The music is said to be grand on this day, the hymn, "Gloria, Laus et Honor" and the "Stabat Mater" being sung. In all Catholic countries

THE SERVICE IN THE CHURCHES

is ever very imposing on Palm Sunday, and the day held in great veneration, the people wearing bits of palm, or box or yew in their hats, and otherwise attaching to it an especial respect. In this city it is observed by the Catholic Church with great solemnity. The faithful flock to the churches to see the palm blessed, and at all the masses the people get a twig of palm, which they carry with them from church, after the manner of the custom of the old countries. The day affords a good theme for preachers, and, as it is the opening of the Holy Week, exhortations of the most pathetic sort are delivered from the pulpits. On Wednesday, Thursday and Friday at the Cathedral and at St. Stephen's church the "Tenebræ" will be sung, and all the other sad but imposing ceremonies carried out.

ANOTHER CHILD OF ERIE DEAD.

The New York and Boston Express Company "Gone Where the Woodbine Twineth"—Assets, $196,000; Liabilities, $250,000.

The bursting of the Erie bubble has set loose and sent flying about a number of lighter and lesser bubbles, which held on to it and kept afloat through its inflation. One of these light and airy things—the New York and Boston Express Company—originally started by and for Fisk and Gould and the Erie Ring, has just gone, as Fisk would have said, "where the woodbine twineth." It was started a couple of years ago with funds furnished from the treasury of the Erie Railroad. Its business was done by Fisk's steamers to Boston—the Narragansett Steamship Company, the Fall River and Old Colony and Norwich line, the New Haven and Northampton Railroad, the New Jersey Southern, the New Jersey Northern, the Erie and other railroads. Through the aid given to it by Erie it has crushed out several local express and freight companies, but the recent change in the Erie management has caused it to collapse. It has been known for some time that the express company was on the verge of bankruptcy, but it was hoped by its friends to weather the storm and carry on the business as usual. The company had purchased the express paraphernalia from Fisk and Gould, and paid the price in bonds of the New York and Boston Express Company, to the amount of $171,000, to secure which they executed a chattel mortgage to the Erie Company. They having nothing to pay, and no prospect of better times ahead, the Erie Company foreclosed the mortgage, and

THE CREDITORS OF THE EXPRESS COMPANY COULD DO NOTHING

more than call a meeting to consult and devise such measures as they might to get all or any part of the several sums due to them. Such a meeting was held yesterday in the law office of Redfield & Barrett, in Nassau street. Mr. O. P. Archer, Vice President of the Erie road, was called to the chair, and business was about to proceed when an unlucky scribe of the Associated Press unrolled his manifold, and at once the suspicions of some of the limbs of the law were aroused. Lawyer Redfield sprang to his feet and declared that the meeting was a private one and related merely to bankruptcy business; that

REPORTERS WERE BAD COMPANY

and should be excluded, and he therefore made a motion to that effect. The motion was