RELIGIOUS.

Christianity Commended to the Congregations of the City and Suburbs by the Clergy of the Christian Churches.

Beecher and Dr. Newman on Huxley, Darwin, Agassiz and Other Scientists.

Religious Rites and Ceremonies Discussed by Dr. Wentworth.

Dr. Chapin on the Ascension of Christ.

The Happiness of True Religion, by Mr. Hepworth.

Enchanting Music at the Catholic Churches.

The Power of the Priesthood to Forgive Sins, by Father Kearney.

Morley Punshon at the Brooklyn Academy of Music.

Interesting Ceremonial at the Convent of the Good Shepherd.

CHURCH OF THE DIVINE PATERNITY.

Sermon by the Rev. Dr. Chapin—Christ's Ascension—Its Signification and Influence Upon the World—Is Heaven a Limited Place and Shall We Know One Another Hereafter?

The Rev. Dr. Chapin discoursed yesterday morning with his wonted eloquence on the Feast of Ascension. He said:—During the past week a portion of the Christian Church has celebrated the Feast of Ascension. Great is the significance of this event in relation to the personal career of Jesus Himself. The reverend gentleman did not propose to reopen the question of the miracles. There are those who would preserve the historical Christ without the miracles. But if we have a historical Christ at all we must accept the miracles. Apart from this line of discussion the ascension of Jesus has a special signification in relation to His personal history. The ascension is of peculiar importance, as completing the history of the resurrection.

THE SPECTACLE OF HIS MORTAL DISSOLUTION

ought to have excited doubts as to His ascension. But the event of the resurrection showed that death had no power over Him. It was necessary that Jesus should leave the world in a manifest way. His ascension was the crowning event of His career. It has not only a historical completeness, but also a moral fitness. The miracles of our Lord are not mere wonders; they are vehicles of help and healing. He came to this world from the depth of infinite mercy, and His closing act was in accordance with His entire career. A great deal is said about

CHRIST'S SECOND COMING.

His ascension was peaceful and noiseless. Are we not justified in saying that His second coming will be in like manner? Thus He often does come and has come. He comes in the utterance of every truth. He comes in the workings of human hearts. If civilization has shown any advance it has been rooted in the teachings and the influence of Christ. It has been said that the record of the Christian Church has been one of intolerance, strife and bloodshed. All this is alas, too true! But there is a distinction between the folly of men and the substance of religion, as Christ taught it. Shall we condemn science because there have been bigoted men who professed it? Shall we condemn political movements because politicians are sometimes acrimonious and unscrupulous? Whatever persecution has been in the Christian Church is in direct contradiction to the spirit of Jesus. By our Saviour's ascension to heaven we have confirmation that

CHRISTIANITY DESCENDED FROM HEAVEN.

Its peculiar power consists in the fact that it comes from above. Man always needs and will always need something superior to his nature. Man cannot exalt himself if there is not something higher than himself. All human history has a superhuman origin. Even its conflicting elements are under Divine control. But we need a clear, bright light to steer us on the pathway upwards. Man needs the strength of a Divine aim to lift him out of the conflict of passions. If Christ had remained in the grave

THE GRAVE OF CHRIST

would have been a shrine of Mecca. There would have been a geographical limit to Him; but by His ascension He becomes a spiritual and universal Saviour. Wherever the thought of man ascends He is there. He is all around us. What objection we may have to the forms of miracles when we come to the kernel of the fact it unfolds the truth of a higher sphere. We can't get along without forms and symbols. The representations of Christ which great artists have given us may be all false, and yet who can behold them without being moved? The reverend gentleman continued:—Protestant, as I am, even image worship appeals to my imagination. I do not say that

THE REAL HEAVEN

is not a place. There must be somewhere a place where spirits dwell; where the shadow of death never comes; where the wicked cease to trouble and the weary are at rest. God is a spirit; but can we comprehend God without attributing some form to Him. The one grand point settled is the fact of a spiritual region of a supreme reality. The moment we have faith in Christ's ascension we may feel that others whom we have known have also ascended. Christ went up in form, in bodily aspect; so those who depart from us go up in form, abide in form. There is a spiritual body. If so the question arises,

SHALL WE KNOW ONE ANOTHER HEREAFTER?

I am sure we shall know each other, as we can know each other now. We are enclosed in practical materialism. Man needs nothing so much as the faith that this world is not all. We need the habit of looking up, but we must find our vision applicable here. Our ideal is above—our work below. Faith in the ascension of Jesus asserts a twofold tendency: it lifts us up while it leads us on.

ST. STEPHEN'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH.

Sermon by the Rev. Dr. McGlynn—The Paraclete—Charity—The Music at the Mass.

The midsummer heat of yesterday did not not deter people from crowding this church at the high mass in the morning. It had, however, the effect of giving to the congregation a very summer-like appearance, for summer styles of clothing caught the eye everywhere, the result being a very pleasant variety of all sorts of light and fanciful contrasts.

Seldom has there been finer music at a high mass than was heard here yesterday. The service opened with a "Kyrie," by Nini, the "Christie Eleison" being rendered by the soprano and tenor. The "Gloria" was also by Nini, and was well begun by all the voices. The "Gratias Agimus" was a contralto solo, rendered by Mme. Bowler very sweetly and with great effect. In the quartet "Qui tollis" the voices were fully sympathetic and not a graceless note occurred. Signor Coletti sang the bass solo "Quoniam" with great power and artistic force, his magnificent voice, at times, giving an almost dramatic character to his rendering of the passage. The "Credo" was that recently composed by Mr. Danforth, the organist of the church. It opens in six-eight movement, solid and firm, and glides easily along in the ecclesiastical style to the "Gentum non factum," which is a beautiful tenor solo, elaborate in design, and to which ample justice was done yesterday by Mr. Bernhardt. The "Et in Incarnatus" is a chorus with two obligatos—soprano and tenor—and these were effectively rendered, Miss Emma Housen singing with customary grace and purity of tone. This lady also sung the "Et in Spiritum," contralto solo, with remarkable effect, every note telling. Signor Coletti, in the "Et Unam Sanctam," was even better, if possible, than in his solo in the "Gloria." The offertory piece and the "Agnus Dei" were both arranged by Mr. Danforth, to whom is due no small praise for the rich musical treat given yesterday.

The high mass was sung by the Rev. Father Lynch, and after the first Gospel the Rev. Dr. McGlynn preached from the Gospel of the day. Having remarked that the Gospel was peculiarly appropriate yesterday, he proceeded to explain the meaning of the Lord's promise of sending the Paraclete, what the Paraclete was and the purposes for which the Holy Spirit was sent. The Paraclete was the spirit of truth which Christ promised should be from the Father, and this was given as a comfort to our fallen natures, in need of sustenance. The preacher then went on to speak of the love we should bear to God under this spirit of enlightenment, and pointed to the extraordinary work of the Almighty in enriching the poor, who were uneducated, with graces and purity of soul of the most exalted kind. He then introduced some remarks about that charity without which all else is unavailing, and on this point gave an exhortation to love one's neighbor for the love of God. The sermon was both eloquent and profound, full of Scriptural truths and theological doctrine, put before the audience in simple but most expressive language. The description of the Saviour's love in sending the Paraclete, which was to come from the Father himself, contained many passages sublime in the exalted thoughts with which they abounded. Throughout the whole discourse were scattered striking thoughts that appealed constantly for the sympathy of the audience, and sought for a recognition of the doctrines inculcated. As is usual with this preacher, he closed his discourse by inviting his congregation to adopt the truths set before them as their own, and to act accordingly.

In the evening the first grand concert of the New York Choral Society was given at this church in aid of the New York Foundling Asylum. Archbishop McCloskey and a number of priests were present.

ST. PAUL'S METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

The Promises of God and Their Fulfilment—Sermon by Dr. Eddy, of Washington.

In St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal church, Twenty-second street and Fourth avenue, the services were conducted yesterday and the sermon preached by Dr. Eddy, pastor of the Metropolitan church, Washington, D. C. Dr. Eddy is one of the most distinguished scholars and brilliant preachers in the Methodist Church, and the mere announcement of his name was sufficient to fill St. Paul's with a large and fashionable congregation.

He took for his text the fourth verse of the first chapter of the second epistle of St. Peter—"Whereby are given to us exceeding great and precious promises." He said:—The promises of God and the hopes held out to us in them are the divine assurances of mercies and blessings. They bring pardon to the guilty, help to the helpless, compassion to the sorrowing and comfort to the needy. They are limited by no time and curtailed by no circumstances. The conditions have only to be observed and the reward is sure. He that pleads a divine power, however, must be certain that he is the person and his the condition indicated in the promise, or the Word will be of none effect. The guilty cannot claim the promise held out to the penitent; the hardened man cannot put himself in the place of the contrite one. But let the conditions be observed, and the fulfilment is certain. If it can be shown that any one of God's promises ever failed in accomplishment, we are willing to admit that the record in which they are given is uninspired. We must consent wholly and without reservation to repose our trust in God, and rely upon His promises to obtain the exceeding great and precious things they promise.

They hold out to us two things—first, to escape the corruptions of the world; and, secondly, to obtain the reward of our constancy. Sin is the dark incubus that broods like a spectre over the otherwise fair and beautiful world. It is it that fills our jails, peoples our lunatic asylums, desolates so many homes and opens so many graves. If we would escape from its slavery and get free from its pollution we have to look to Jesus through the eye of faith to obtain assistance. The conquest with the dread enemy is no easy one. He who would conquer must fight, and, laying hold of faith, claim a representation in the glorious franchise of saintship. If we would escape from bondage to the great haven of rest we must lean upon Jesus as a broken reed; our eternal reliance must be upon His all-conquering power. So the exceeding great and precious promise, that we will be made partakers of His divine nature. This is the reward of our constancy and our struggles to be one with the Father—Godlike in heart and Godlike in life, Godlike in will and Godlike in action. To reach this divine nature we must trample under foot the corruptions of the world, proclaim eternal war with sin, turn our faces towards purity and our backs towards impurity, and the future is certain.

The promises are so lofty and noble in the divine heights to which they point, so touching in their tenderness and so rich in their reward, that they commend themselves alike to the grandest faculties and the simplest intellect. Royal in their lineage, they are royal in their rewards. By the exercise of the regal power of will they are attainable. We are not of those who look upon the exercise of will as an absurdity. That to pray for its suppression is not wrong no one will deny. A nature without will is the baldest mockery. To be great we must be decided, assert the principles of our manhood and boldly decide to not abate one iota of our Heaven-sent principles. The union of the human with the Divine nature does not destroy the power of will. We retain our faculties and our powers only that they are purified and strengthened by the power of the Divine nature. The sun shines upon the earth, but it does not cease to be the earth thereby—it is only the more so from the fertilizing rays; upon the ocean, and it is only the more the ocean from the countless beauties that sparkle on its surface. So we in our union with the Saviour do not cease to be men, but, on the contrary, put on the perfection of manhood. There is a world of meaning in this thought of the infinite. In our childhood we can remember the thoughts that used to gather around our opening years, our mind travelled over creation and its wonders, till the question occurs, when we fancy we have traced them to their source, Where did God begin? Have you ever stood at the foot of a high mountain and looked up, with its darkening shadows around you, or gone to the brink of the ocean and gazed upon the vast expanse of waters spread out before you, without straining your eyes to see if you could distinguish the other side and see the cloud-capped spires of the Old World, your mind filled with vague longings after something intangible that you cannot define? In the stillness of a starless night you wait and watch, until perchance a star peeps out of the darkness like a beacon or a headlight, and you breathe a sigh of relief that you are relieved from the dread immensity of the stillness and the darkness. What are all these but longings after the infinite? for the soul must have an infinite ocean in which to swim or it would not have rest. There are many things in the plan of creation and redemption we cannot understand. Nature is full of mysteries. You may question this and dispute that, but how can we who do not understand creation presume to measure the Creator? Between the Old and the New World, the mother country and the daughter, there stretches a tiny piece of cable. You look at it, but you cannot understand its meaning or explain its philosophy. It tells you nothing of the secrets of the mighty deep, the strange monsters that inhabit it and the countless treasures it engulphs; nothing of the buried steamer and the doomed sailor of the subterranean caverns with which tradition peoples it; it utters no word; the stories of its romances and its novels are unwritten books. But there is a grand reality about it all the time; for when it touches the other side then it speaks, and President communicates to Monarch and Monarch to President, Premier to Secretary and Secretary to Premier. So is it with many things in the realms of providence and grace. In the chain of promise that stretches from earth to heaven the puzzles that occupy the brains of schoolmen may not be explained, but we speak on earth and God answers in heaven, and we want no more.

The still, small voice of mercy speaks in all these promises of God. He stands behind them and guarantees their certainty. This is an age of force, and we want to have more faith. There is a ceaseless conflict of contending powers waging, and in it is the war of science against orthodoxy, or the upheaving of an earthquake, which destroys or desolates our Pacific coast with its resistless power. But the work of God is a noiseless one. We can hear the groan of the earthquake, but we cannot discern any sound from the sunbeam; and so thought is silent, but it controls force and is continually conquering it. To the sinner and the saint the promises are alike precious. To the one they hold out the promise of forgiveness; to the other help in time of need. Trusting in Christ we are safe in Him—as safe here on earth as if we had entered the golden gates and taken our places with the blood-washed throng before the great white throne. Mr. Eddy, in conclusion, said:—Oh, may our Church never cast off her allegiance to and faith in these promises. As decade after decade and quadrennial after quadrennial passes by, whatever other changes it may witness, may it never lose the simple faith of its early days in the God who has sustained it. I walked through Greenwood Cemetery, and as I looked at the evergreens and emblems on the graves, pointing heavenwards, I thought of the saying of Emerson, in one of his latest books, "that eternity is but a sentiment." Oh, Emerson! man of profound culture and rare culture, poet, philosopher and orator! come forth from your academic shades and look out unto the fulfilment of the glorious promises held forth to the believer! Great man though you be, I would rather adhere to the simple faith of a trusting child than to all the researches of your philosophy. There is an immortality, and when the end of life is reached and we come to the bank of the great river, and, looking beyond, we shall see cherubim and seraphim, with he our elder brother in the midst, we shall pass over, and be for ever hid with Christ in God. Thank God for the good old doctrine of immortality.

ST. PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL.

The Birthright of the Church—The Power to Forgive Sins—Sermon by Father Kearney.

The high mass at the Cathedral yesterday was celebrated with the usual pomp and gorgeousness. The altar was tastefully decorated, and a hundred glittering lights shone brightly from either side of the altar. Mr. Gustavus Schmitz, the organist of the Cathedral, had the musical part of the service carefully arranged and artistically rendered. There were about thirty-five or forty acolytes on the altar during the service, and a part of them held lighted wax tapers during a part of the ceremony.

Father McNamee acted as celebrant, and Father Kearney preached the sermon, the evident end of which seemed to be to prove the power of the priesthood to forgive or retain sins, even as that power had been bequeathed to the apostles by Christ himself.

Before reading the Gospel Father Kearney stated that next Saturday would be the feast of the Vigil of Pentecost and also a fast day of obligation. "On next Sunday—the Feast of Pentecost—the last mass at the Cathedral will be a Pontifical high mass. Father Burke will deliver a lecture at the Academy on Thursday next, by special request, and those who intend to attend should get tickets before the night of the lecture."

After the list of orders for the coming week the Gospel was read, which was taken from St. Mark, sixteenth chapter, beginning with the fourteenth verse and ending with the chapter. As before stated, the aim of the sermon seemed to be to prove the power of the priest in forgiving sins, inasmuch as he is the successor of the apostles. The gist of the sermon will be found in the following:—The earthly work of our Lord being done, He departed to open for us the gates of heaven. At leaving the apostles He uttered a commandment—that is, He ordained the priesthood, when He said, 'Go forth and preach the Word to all the world.' When He had done His part He deputed the chosen Twelve to continue the same, and as they were not destined to live forever in the flesh their successors were commanded at the same time to do the same. God has said that His Church would last until the end of time—that is, the Church built upon Simon Peter—and He also meant that that Church should remain unaltered even unto the end of time, and as a consequence of this the power of the apostles of His Church must remain inviolably the same as they were when He founded the Church, or if not the Church would be altered, and consequently not the Church He founded. If the Church of God was to remain unaltered forever her ministers must also remain unaltered, and must have the same power that He bequeathed to the apostles. If the power of forgiving sins was only to extend to the apostles, with them the Church he founded would cease to exist.

But this power was not only given to the apostles, but to their successors, and in this way the Church of Christ has been and will be perpetuated until the end of time.

Peter, the rock on which our Catholic Church is founded, was the most favored of all the apostles during the first year he was with our Lord. He called him "Peter," which means a rock. The occasion when He gave Simon this name was when He asked him who he thought He was, and Simon answered, "The Son of the living God." When Simon said this Christ answered and said, "Simon, thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church." It was Peter, James and John who witnessed the transfiguration on the mount. It was Peter, James and John who went with Christ when He went to resurrect the daughter of the High Priest, and it was Peter who proposed to fill the vacancy made by the fall of Judas.

We notice that in the Scriptures Peter is always mentioned first, he being, as I said before, the most favored of the Twelve, and the rock on which rested the immovable Church of Christ. Now, how are we to know which Church is Christ's Church, in these days when no one man's brain can contain the names of the various sects? We shall always know it by these signs: "It is one, it is holy, it is apostolic." It is one inasmuch as all the fold believe in one faith, and that faith has a visible head on earth, the successor of St. Peter. It is holy, it being an emanation from God himself. It is apostolic because its priests have received their power from Christ.

CHURCH OF THE MESSIAH.

Glances at Jesus' Life and Mission—Mistakes by Looking at Only One of His Qualities—This World Part of the Next—Sermon by Rev. G. W. Briggs, of Cambridge.

There was, as usual, a large congregation at the Church of the Messiah, corner of Park avenue and Thirty-fourth street. Rev. G. W. Briggs, D. D., of Cambridge, occupied the pulpit. His text was chosen from John—"There was a marriage in Cana, and the mother of Jesus was there, and both Jesus was called and his disciples to the marriage." I think, he began, that we seldom grasp the true meaning of this incident in the history of Jesus. Contrast it with the scene almost immediately preceding it; see how beautiful it is! Observe its place in the record of His life; consider what a revelation it is, both of His Gospel and His heart! He had gone to the wilderness for solitude in which to meditate. He seemed like

ANOTHER JOHN THE BAPTIST.

But the loneliness of the wilderness gives place to jubilee. It is a marriage festival. On the third there was a marriage. Three days was Jesus in the desert; on the third He was at the nuptials. He is no longer austere; His brow is no longer wrinkled with suffering. All the sweetness of His nature gushes forth. He is the loving man, the one we can take to our hearts and keep there. What did Jesus do when He came down from temptation? His first action is the key. He mixed in revelry; temptation was an incident of His ministry. He does not by set designs strive to accomplish this or that; no one was more spontaneous than He. He did what the occasion, what the hour, demanded. After enlarging on this part of his subject the speaker proceeded to state that religion has suffered greatly suffered, but suffered most of all from the

MISCONCEPTION OF ITS DISCIPLES.

Let them not quarrel with those of another belief; Christianity is not to be proved by the sword. Let them show the omnipotence of God, the symmetry and grace of His religion. Men looked upon Christ's solitude and became ascetics. They forgot His attendance at the marriage feast, His participation in its joy. Listen to the

WORDS FROM THE PULPIT.

This world is a prison, a place of probation. We hear that Jesus suffered; the love of some men has been concentrated upon that quality. His brow wrinkled with thought and pain, His body writhing in agony. The speaker said he believed that Christ felt as intense, as thrilling, pleasures as His sufferings. He also said that he wished that something might be substituted for the cross, the emblem of pain and ignomy—something that should symbolize the joy of Christianity. If a father will give good gifts to his children, how much more will your Father which is in heaven give to those that ask! This earth is not a curse. God made it and called it good. In Him we live and move and have our being. Every hour His hand is renewing life. A curse is it! Learn to look at it with Jesus, seeking

GOD AND GOOD IN EVERYTHING.

How beautiful to view the world as led by Jesus! What fascination in everything! This contemplation may bring devotional sentiments, but devotional sentiments are vain when viewed with one good action. Jesus tells us how surpassingly lovely one good action is; how much of Heaven there is in it. He sees in it all the beauty and majesty of an angel. How the words, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," annihilate the space between heaven and earth. Jesus did not come to prepare us for heaven. He came to

MAKE HEAVEN ON EARTH.

The doctrine of Jesus is one. The passages of Scripture that seem to contradict the preceding sentiments are easily refuted. Jesus came to open the beauties of the earth; to make the humblest duty grand; to make the world a room in the Father's mansion. What harmonies are there between the exposition of Jesus and science as it gradually expands! The law of nature is always the same. The spiritual law is always the same. There are many mansions in the Father's house, but the same presence, the same beneficence, pervades them all. When will the joy that reigned at the marriage feast reign on earth?

DOUBLE CEREMONY AT THE CONVENT OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

At three o'clock yesterday afternoon the secluded chapel in the Convent of the Good Shepherd, at Yorkville, was the scene of a double ceremony—that of the reception of three young ladies and the profession of three more, the latter having passed the two years' novitiate satisfactorily, and the former three just entering upon the same term of probation. The several altars were simply decorated with flowers culled from the garden of the convent, among which the pure and lowly "lily of the valley" shone with a modest grace well becoming the occasion. Candelabra of chaste design supported the wax candles, whose soft light suffused a gentle radiance over the choir of white-robed religious as they slowly wended their way into the chapel. When all had taken their places, the postulants and novices kneeling before the grating separating the altar from the choir, the celebrant, Rev. Father Durthaler, gave to each a blessed candle, and all seating themselves, he addressed them upon the two ceremonies about to be consummaed, contrasting vividly the different states of life as represented in the world and the cloister—the one presenting honor, station and wealth; the other humility, seclusion and poverty; and the latter being preferred by these youthful candidates that they might the more perfectly imitate Him who has said, "Learn of me, for I am meek and humble of heart."

When the discourse was ended the ceremony of reception first took place. The postulants kneeling before the altar were interrogated as to their demands, and responding that they desired the "holy habit of religion," they were led from the chapel to lay aside the soft flowing lace and

BRIDAL WREATHS,

and exchange the habiliments of the world for the snowy habit of the cloister. Presently returning, they knelt again before the altar; the celebrant gave to each the white scapular, saying, "Receive the yoke of Jesus Christ;" then the white veil to conceal her from the gaze of men; then the ivory chaplet of beads as a mark of their tender devotion to the virgin mother of Jesus Christ; and last, the white cloak to cover them as with a mantle of charity, when they returned to their places in the choir. The candidates for profession now advanced to the altar and asked to be finally received as members of the community by the recital of the "vow that is perpetual." Being thoroughly examined as to their determination to continue in this choice of life to the end of their days, they each declared it to be their intention to "remain in the house of the Lord forever;" and the Prioress having signified that they had passed the necessary probation, the celebrant bade them accomplish what they had begun, when each in a distinct voice pronounced her vows, and, having appended her signature thereto, knelt aside until the veils were blessed, the choir meantime intoning versicles of appropriate psalms. When the veils had been blessed the celebrant gave to each of

THE CANDIDATES

a silver heart, as an outward sign of her having given her heart entirely to God; and then giving to each the black veil, said, "Put this veil over your eyes, that you may no longer see a world you have renounced forever;" the Prioress having placed a crown of white flowers on the head of each of the newly-professed sisters, the other nuns advanced, and, taking the black pall, held it in an unbroken rank over the prostrate forms of the three youthful "brides of Christ," while the organ pealed forth the requiem of the dead, and the religious in melting strains intoned the "Miserere." When this was finished the celebrant sung, "Rise, my sisters," and the pall being withdrawn they arose, and again kneeling before the altar each arisen sister received a cross, the celebrant, saying, "Receive this cross, and, in imitation of Jesus Christ, remain fastened to it until death. Go in peace! God has accepted you." Rising and returning to their places in the choir, "Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament" concluded the services. The friends of the religious retired to the parlors and were soon joined by the young brides, whose joy was as serene as the smiles of heaven. The names of the young ladies who received the habit were Miss Susan Russell (in religion Sister M. Marcella), Miss Minnie Flynn (in religion Sister M. Catherine, of Sienna), Miss Mary O'Keefe (in religion Sister M. Angeline). The names of the young ladies who received the black veil and took the solemn vows were Miss Mary Grace (in religion Sister M., of the Immaculate Conception), Miss Mary McKeon (Sister M. Berchmans), Miss Bridget Blackwell (Sister M. Dositheus).

CHURCH OF THE DISCIPLES.

The Hope of Salvation—Sermon by the Rev. Dr. Hepworth.

Mr. Hepworth's evening text was taken from Acts xxvii., 22—"Be of good cheer." After commenting at some length on the text, he said:—I think cheerfulness is not only a privilege, but a duty. There are very few experiences so trying that the heart cannot smile. The lips may refuse to laugh because the eyes are full of tears, but the trustful heart may feel that though life sometimes gets one down, it can never conquer, and this gives a color of gladness to every sorrow. If you are on board a ship in a dangerous storm, when the waves pound the vessel until she shivers and shakes in every timber, and come rushing over the deck in a perfect flood like so many demons, seeming to say, I've got you now, you walk the deck all night long if you have little or no faith in the captain. If he looks as though he did not comprehend the situation, or hesitates and vacillates in giving orders, you get not a wink of sleep, you are harrassed by doubts and fears. But if, on the other hand, you are sure that the craft under your feet is sound from keelson to masthead, and that the captain, who has been through a hundred storms worse than this, knows just what to do and how to do it, you turn in without dread or fear and sleep as though you were a child in the arms of your mother. So is it in life. If you have no faith, you may well be anxious and solicitous, for who can tell what a day may bring forth? If your belief in God is only that which, years ago, you learned by rote out of the catechism, you have good reason to be careworn and troubled. But if, on the other hand, God is

A PERSONAL FRIEND,

whose face you have seen, and whose hand has touched you, then the deepest sorrow will show a bright side, and the most tormenting disappointments will fail to rob you of a certain feeling, worth all the world to you, that it will come out right after all. All possible evils may fly out of Pandora's box into your face if hope, divine hope, is left, you can be patient and quiet, and wear not a frown, but a smile.

True religion always produces happiness; that is its business. When you hear a man sigh about this vale of tears, and sing with a lugubrious tone "I would not live always," you may always know that he is consciously or unconsciously a great humbug. 'Tis a beautiful world to live in, for our Father made it. Long faces, except where there is great affliction, and whining tones under any possible circumstances have no place assigned in the divine economy. The old prophet said, "There's a time for everything." Yes, that's true; there's a time to laugh and a time to cry, a time to be born and a time to die, but no time to growl and yap at fortune like a whipped dog. When a man gets up in prayer meeting and tells you he would rather die than live—that he's waiting for the Lord to come and take him—you may be sure that he is talking nonsense. If the Lord should really come for him he would go down on his knees and beg for a little longer lease of life. He is the last man to be taken at his word.

Now, continued the preacher, I do not say that all men's interpretation of religion is cheerful; far from it. I only say that no man has got the true religion of Jesus Christ unless it makes him supremely happy. I deplore more than I can tell the fact that there is a great deal of stuff in the community labelled religion, which is no more like what you get out of the New Testament than a drizzle is like May sunshine. A great many men have gone into utter scepticism because the religion which they have been taught to believe robs life of all its beauty. Some of you have come to me and said that you find it hard to believe in any religion, because the particular kind in which you were brought up does not satisfy you. How short sighted, not to say foolish. Because the doctor whom you call in bleeds and blisters you nearly to death, do you say there is no such thing as medical science? Because the medicine you have taken does not suit your case, do you therefore refuse to take any medicine? Voltaire got

SICK OF RELIGION,

as it was administered in France, and at once said all priests are hypocrites. He went to England and saw a different system, and found that it was only the kind that he had seen that was wrong. So I say to you, don't grow indifferent because you have been fed on the "Westminster Catechism," and find you can't digest it. Do what you do at the table every day; if one article of food disagrees with you, change your diet, and you have solved the riddle. Another dreadful mistake is made by a great many parents. They say:—"I will not bias my boy's mind; I will let him grow up with his own opinions, and he shall be Methodist or Baptist or what not, just as he sees fit." Not bias your boy! Don't you think enough of your

RELIGIOUS OPINIONS

to give them to him? You must have fed on husks if you are not willing to let your child feed on what you have lived on. Let him grow up and form his own opinions? How absurd! He will then have no opinions at all. The chances are that he will be utterly indifferent to all creeds, and perhaps to all religious belief. Pray make that mistake no more. If you believe anything, and it has helped you through life, then give it to your children and it will help them.

BROOKLYN CHURCHES.

PLYMOUTH CHURCH.

Self-Government and Its Social Effects—Sermon by the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher.

Plymouth church was crowded yesterday morning, and Mr. Beecher preached one of his most powerful and interesting sermons. Previous to the sermon Mr. Beecher baptized a number of infants, and made various announcements to his congregation. He preached from the first eleven verses of the first chapter of the Second Epistle of Peter, in which the apostle confirmed the people in hope of the increase of God's graces, and exhorted them by faith and good works to make sure their calling.

Mr. Beecher said that men were fond of looking at the divine government from that side where it could least be seen and least known, and where they were most subject to the errors of their own imaginations and the obstructions of a philosophy falsely so-called. It was far better to look at the great truths of divine government—the mystery of God's dealing with men in this world from the human side. We were called by God, and it was a call that was to be answered. It was revealed that the destiny of the human soul was to come in participation of the divine nature. On account of this, said the apostle, "Give all diligence." "Add faith." What was faith? Supersensuousness? What was supersensuousness? It was that moral intuition, that moral insight by which we discerned the great invisible world. Now, said the apostle, "Add to your faith virtue," which was not what we meant. Our understanding of virtue was the opposite of vice, and in the apostolic mind the idea was practicalness, substantial righteousness. So the apostle said, "Add to this practical and righteous and wise conduct." It did not say "add to" in the original, but provide or develop in. And in virtue, knowledge, said the apostle; but by this was not meant scientific knowledge. There was a higher knowledge—those subtle intuitions of truth which men had who lead high and noble lives.

A MAN OF GREAT CONSCIENCE

had a great sense of truth. A man who cultivated his tastes had a finer knowledge of beauties. The knowledge meant in the text was moral intuition. "And in knowledge temperance." By temperance was meant self-government, not the local use of the term. "And in temperance develop patience"—endurance, the spirit of bold, courageous, quiet waiting. No man could beat down time and events by force. Let it not be stoical, stubborn, sulky waiting, but that kind which believed that God reigned. "And to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness;" so that you had a warm sympathy for your family, for your neighbors, for your Church, for all other churches, for non-church folks and for all the world. "And to brotherly kindness charity." Mr. Beecher remarked that the idea of the destiny of man was one that should lead him into the likeness and into the participation of the divine nature. John told us that we were sons of God; but what that meant he did not know, and nobody has found out since. We are sons, but it don't appear what we shall be. We had hints and analogies of the way through life, and it was evident that we were seeking something higher. We were tending away from the point at which we began. We began at the point of selfishness and ended at the point of disinterested benevolence. We began at the animal head of life, and were to go through by that path that leads us into the way of divine excellences. It was of little consequence to Mr. Beecher where he came from but it was of a great deal of consequence where he went to. There were many men who were investigating where man came from; but the preacher did not think it would do any good to investigate the

ORIGIN OF THE HUMAN RACE.

He regarded Mr. Darwin's labors with a profound interest, and believed that the world would owe him a great debt of gratitude, but he was not able to accept all his speculations. Mr. Beecher did not participate in the horror felt by those who thought they had sprung from some lower forms of existence. "I would just as lief," said the Plymouth church pastor, "spring from a monkey as some men I know of." (Laughter.) He did not care, however, so much about that thing, never having "been there." He wanted to know where he was going to, and he did not care where he came from. Now let men bore in the rear, it is for me to look to see where I am going to. No man ever built a house with one lick, except when he was in summer dreams. When men shut their eyes and are architects of scenery they can build earths. Many suppose that when a man was converted by the power of God that the spirit of God went like a flash of lightning. Did you ever know lightning when it struck a mountain to coin the metal in the mountain and put the government stamp on the pieces? The conversion of man just started him and told him to work out his salvation himself! Who ever threw an acorn at the ground and caught an oak by the rebound? To suppose, then, that the grace of God did the whole work for the man was contrary to the uniform testimony of the Scriptures and universal experience. While, the pastor said, he had great respect for people who were

SEEKING A HIGH CHRISTIAN LIFE,

he would thank them not to use language that misled. When he heard men say that they had reached a perfection in Christian life he laughed, for the same reason he did when he saw a child making a baby house and supposing it was a real house.

It was said that Solomon's Temple was built without the sound of a hammer; so was God's temple of the soul. It would be a temple built in darkness, but revealed in light. Some said that if they could get back to nature how easier society would be. Where is nature—in the cradle or in perfect, ripe manhood? Tell me that a state of nature is a state of blessedness! It is a state of savageism.

Mr. Beecher contended that men were not to be valued by their value in society. He who was poor outwardly might carry all the signs of sonship inwardly. In life who could tell what men were? As illustrating this Mr. Beecher referred to a circumstance which occurred at his father's house when he was a boy. His father had in his employ as stableman a man who proved to be a Latin and a Greek scholar, and who read and studied at the close of day in the kitchen. "And that man," said Mr. Beecher, "knew more in his little finger than I did in my body, and he was scrubbing my father's horses!" Where were your queen's found? Not in palaces, but in hovels. Mr. Beecher, in concluding, contended that it was just as hard to be wicked as it was to be virtuous.

THE ACADEMY SERVICES.

Rarely, if ever, has the Academy of Music been filled at a religious service as it was filled yesterday afternoon when Rev. W. Morley Punshon preached one of the ablest sermons ever delivered within its walls. From pit to dome every available sitting or standing place was filled. The stage was crowded, and hundreds who could not gain an entrance left murmuring at their ill luck. Guards were placed at the doors to keep the crowds out when the building had been filled. At three o'clock the Academy was more than ordinary well filled; but while others were gathering for the succeeding half hour the Rev. C. C. McCabe and Philip Phillips entertained the audience with songs of the sanctuary. The introductory services were conducted by Drs. Upham, Brunson and Newman, after which Mr. Punshon stepped forward, and said that he needed no greater excitement than that inspired by the audience before him, and he therefore requested the people to keep perfectly still while he attempted to explain the first two verses of the second chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Colossians—"For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you and for them in Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh; praying earnestly that your hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and the Father and Christ." Mr. Punshon then analyzed this prayer of Paul, and sentence by sentence, and almost word by word, brought out the full beauty and meaning of each. He showed how necessary comfort and rest is to every soul, and that these can spring only from within. And especially do they arise from hearts knit together in love. And this leads to riches of understanding—to the assurance and full assurance of understanding, and for what purpose?—the acknowledgment of the mystery of God and the Father and Christ. On this last thought Mr. Punshon became sublimely eloquent as he pointed out some of the characteristics of God, the mysterious. The greatest triumph of faith, he said, is the acknowledgment of a mystery. The sovereignty of God is suggested in the first idea of the mystery of God, but His Fatherhood appears in the second; so that we can look to Him, not as a kingly tyrant, but as a loving father. And the mystery of Christ—what is that? Without it the other two mysteries would be incomprehensible to us; but they are now brought within the comprehension of our finite understanding. There are students up in heaven who have been trying to solve this mystery. And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness. We shall join them by and by, and shall acknowledge Christ our all in all. Mr. Punshon urged the audience to acquaint themselves with this mystery.

SERVICES AT THE WASHINGTON AVENUE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

Religious Rites and What Ceremonies of the Church Portend.

The Rev. Dr. Erastus Wentworth, of the Troy Conference, preached to a large congregation yesterday morning at the Washington avenue Methodist Episcopal church, at the corner of Greene and Washington avenues. After the reading of the Scriptures and prayer the Rev. Dr. Wentworth took for his text the following:—"For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." (Philippians iii., 3).

The reverend gentleman proceeded to speak of the different interpretations of certain words used in the Scripture upon which individual Churches had been founded. Circumcision was not particularly a Jewish rite; for it pervaded the whole East. It was, doubtless, sanitary in its origin, was understood in history as a sanitary measure and conferred in the religious rite. But it was

A BRUTE CUSTOM,

originating in a brute age, and yet it was practised by divine command, and was a Jewish custom to the present hour. The attitude taken by these people in this respect was one to invite open hostility. The word was used also with a different meaning, as the circumcision of the heart, the circumcision of the lips, &c. Christianity had not prevailed in Jerusalem more than twenty years when a council was called to settle the question as to whether circumcision was necessary to the salvation of the soul. It was

A PROTESTANT COUNCIL,

and the first council ever held, and this body denominated it a yoke which we were not compelled to bear; so the custom was only adhered to by the Jews. He then spoke of the different analogies of the word temple, as used in the Scriptures. The word meant church, the Temple of the Lord, and there were many other names to the same word, and it was not at all surprising that the word "church" meant building and a place of worship. The definition of this word was the contested ground. Who were meant by the faithful? Upon this

DIFFERENCE OF OPINION

were the individual churches built up. One Church is built upon the interpretation of one word and another upon another, and it was impossible to say what Church was the visible Church. Christ had set up a Church for us which we believed was the honest and truthful expression of

THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

There were two words representing the church: one was the synagogue and the other the ecclesia. The Jews adopted the word synagogue and Christ took the word ecclesia. In Deuteronomy it was referred to by Christ as the assembly—"He founded an assembly." Paul's favorite appellation was the "Church of God," and it was Protestantism against circumcision. The forms, rites and ceremonies of the different denominations were then alluded to, particularly those of the Catholics. They had heard considerable of infallibility—of

THE INFALLIBILITY OF THE POPE.

If the Pope was infallible then every single priest of the Papal Church was infallible. It was not right for the Catholics to claim their Church as the only true Church. The Church of God was essentially catholic, no matter whether the denomination was Roman Catholic, Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian or Episcopal. The reverend gentleman was of the opinion that it made but little difference how we interpreted the word. So long as we were consistent we would doubtless

FIND OUR WAY TO HEAVEN.

The thief upon the cross no doubt found his way to heaven. They did not claim to be the Church, but they believed they were members of the Church Catholic. One of the delegates of the Methodist General Conference had suggested that the word "Catholic" be struck out of the ritual, but this should not be done, as no denomination had the right to

CLAIM THE WORD "CATHOLIC"

exclusively. The family name was the Church, and if there was a Roman Catholic Church there was a Protestant Catholic Church, a Baptist Catholic Church, an Episcopal Catholic Church. We all had the right to use the name "catholic," and therefore it should remain in the rituals of our Church. He then alluded to the differences which had prevailed from time to time in the Catholic Church, and argued that thousands of those connected with the Roman Catholic Church would leave it and join other Churches were it not that they believed by so doing they would have to renounce the word "catholic." This was the strength of the Church. It made no difference to what Church or what army they were allied, when the hosts of sin appeared they should unite and take up arms for the common Church of God.

The benediction was pronounced by the Rev. Dr. Boehm, the oldest Methodist minister, being nearly ninety-eight years of age.

ST. JOHN'S METHODIST CHURCH.

The Harmony Between Science and Religion—Sermon by Rev. Dr. Newman.

The Rev. J. J. Newman, D. D., of Washington, occupied the pulpit of the St. John's church, Bedford avenue, yesterday, and took for his text Romans x., 12—"Be not wise in your own conceits." The theme was the harmony between nature and revelation, and in its discussion he thoroughly ventilated the theories of Huxley, Darwin, Agassiz and other modern scientists. He commenced by saying that the speculations of modern scholars were bold and without a parallel in the history of the Church. Those speculations had an unhappy effect upon three classes of persons. They confirmed the infidel in his infidelity, increased the doubts of those who had literary tastes without religious inclinations and disturbed the peace of certain Christians. The idea was prevalent that there was a natural antagonism between science and religion, whereas between the two the utmost harmony prevailed. It would be his object to show that the God of nature is the God of revelation, that He whose glory the Heavens declare is the same whose perfections are recorded in the inspired volume. It is the same voice which, in the beginning, said, "Let there be light, and there was light," afterwards said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The idea that there was an antagonism between nature and revelation received prevalence from the conduct alike of scholars and theologians; scholars who had claimed to be the high priests of the universe; who, smitten with the pride of intellect, claimed to be the sole interpreters of nature, and who presumed to carry their scientific deductions into theological conclusions. On the other hand, theologians who claimed an infallible interpretation of the Bible, and who treated with measured contempt the teachings of nature, to both of those classes the Apostle said:—"Be not wise in their own conceits." The speaker proceeded to enumerate the apparent antagonisms between religion and science, observing that that branch of science which described the organism of the human physique had been brought to bear against the immateriality of mind and the immortality of the soul, a French physiologist uttering the infidel sentiment that, as the liver secretes bile, so the brain secretes thought. The chemist had gone into his laboratory and attempted to prove that St. Peter was a fool because he had predicted the destruction of the earth by fire, and the geologist had passed through all the serial of strata to demonstrate the chronology given by Moses as an error, and that man's residence on the earth is of greater antiquity than is received by the Church. The Scriptures informed us of a series of creations, whereas a distinguished scholar has traced all life back to a protoplasm—a combination of carbon, oxygen and hydrogen. The Scriptures taught that man is made in the image of God, but a great scholar informed the world that he was made in the image of an ape. How long would scholars and theologians remain in the arena of controversy? Was there not some ground of harmony on which both could stand in the dignity of an intelligent manhood. While the ultimate object and mission of the scholar and the theologian is identical—to ascertain truth—yet their departments of work were separate and distinct. Society recognized the doctrine of specialties, both in art, science and in all the professions, and it was but reasonable that the theologian should claim for himself what was accorded to the artist, the geologist and the scientist. A scientific scholar from the course of his investigations was not competent to decide whether his deductions in science are or are not in harmony with the teachings of the Bible. Isaac Newton, as a mathematician and an astronomer, rose head and shoulders above those of his own day; but when Newton attempted to write on the prophesies and upon the teachings of Christ, he was as weak as other men. Agassiz was a great naturalist, but when he asserted that the Bible did not sustain the theory that all men have descended from a common ancestry, he passed the limits of his domain and was not qualified to sit in judgment upon a biblical question. The preacher went on to say that the Scriptures nor did the Church claim infallible biblical interpretation. God had revealed himself to man, but that revelation came to him with all the poverty and imperfection of human language. Dr. Newman showed that recent scientific discoveries demonstrated the truth of many passages of Scripture that were thought to be irreconcilable with science, and said that Christianity had nothing to fear from the bold assertions of the English scientists. There was nothing to fear even from Darwin himself. His book was a great one, but its name was a misnomer. It should have been called the "Ascent of Man," rather than "The Descent of Man;" for if man came from the ape he is the grandest ascension in the history of the world since the days old Elijah went up to heaven. And if man has risen to his present dignity from a beginning so humble, may we not anticipate a development beyond as grand in the future as the present is grand over the past? The speaker then described in eloquent terms what science had accomplished for the civilization and Christianization of the world. Science furnished the Church with answers to infidel objections and illustrations of the grandest doctrine of the Bible. He said that knowledge did not purify or save, and in conclusion maintained that nothing but faith in the Lord Jesus Christ could give peace on earth and happiness in the future.

The doctor's discourse was so erudite that those mercurial Methodists who expected to be lifted to the third heavens by highfalutin oratory must have been disappointed.

LEE AVENUE BAPTIST CHURCH.

Last evening Rev. J. H. Smith preached in the Lee Avenue Tabernacle a discourse upon Gospel liberty and liberality, taking for his text the fifteenth verse of the third chapter of Ephesians—"Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named." He said, fraternized with all who loved Jesus, of whatever creed or color, country or condition. He thought the Church stood in need of more Christ and less creed. He was a Baptist, knowing no baptism but immersion and no right to the ordinance but faith in Christ. In speaking of the Lord's Supper the reverend gentleman said he gave no invitation to the table; Christ gave none. As a servant of the Divine Master he simply announced "the Lord's Supper." The responsibility of the act of communion was with the communicant and his God. The Church had no more right to expel a man from the holy supper than it had to drive a man from the broad sunlight into darkness or forbid a thirsty man from drinking from a spring gushing from the hillside. If the participant was in doctrinal error let him eat and drink. Talk doctrine to him if you choose after the banquet.

FIRST CONCERT OF THE CATHOLIC CHORAL SOCIETY.

A very large audience filled St. Stephen's church last evening, on occasion of the first concert of the new Catholic Choral Society, given for the benefit of the New York Foundling Asylum. The programme consisted of Kalliwoda's grand mass, sung by a chorus of 100 voices, an orchestra of forty philharmonic artists, a solo quartet, Miss Emma Howson, soprano; Miss Gomien, alto; Mr. Charles Fritsch, tenor, and Mr. Sohst, basso; Mr. Gustavus Schmitz, organist, and Mr. Pecher, conductor. The second part comprised a fantasia for the violin, founded on themes from "Masaniello," played superbly by Señor Sarasate; an "Ave Maria" by Mercadante, sung by Mr. Fritsch, whose beautiful tenor voice appeared to unusual advantage; a solo on the French horn by Mr. Henry Schmitz, and the magnificent "Salve Regina" of Gordijiani, for solo, chorus and orchestra. The performance of the mass was highly creditable, with the exception of portions of the Credo, in which the tempo was accelerated to almost indistinctness. Mr. Gustavus Schmitz, by his firm command of the organ, held chorus and orchestra together as with a master hand.