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CHURCH OF THE DISCIPLES.

SUGGESTIONS ABOUT THE ATONEMENT—THE ONLY HELP FOR SINS THAT ARE PAST.

The Church of the Disciples was filled by a large congregation yesterday morning. After the sermon the service of the Communion of the Lord's Supper was celebrated, to which Mr. Hepworth invited "all those who are not against Christ, though they be not for Him, of every sect and every clime, our invitation is as wide as Christ's was, and we recognize no other authority." Mr. Hepworth preached a most eloquent sermon, which was listened to attentively by his large congregation. The text selected was Romans, v., 11—"And not only so, but we also joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement." I am to speak to you this morning upon the most important topic connected with the body of theology. It is a theme in which every one must needs be interested, since the issue involves his own faith. The doctrine I would discuss is the pivot upon which the Christian scheme swings, and without which the pulpit would be suddenly silenced and become dumb. It is symbolized not so much by the capstone of a monument, that which shows the structure arrived at completion and by which the plan of the architect is made perfect, but rather by the keystone of the arch, without which the whole structure must inevitably fall to the ground, but with which the arch is not only complete in its beauty, but omnipotent in its strength. Let me approach my subject, my brethren, with a great deal of care; and, first of all, I would say that one fact, one startling fact, in my own Christian experience, has given me a great deal of trouble and uneasiness. It is the fact of sin. I need not toil long before I discern it. Every day exposes it to view. I am beset by temptations not easily overcome, and when the shadows of each succeeding day gather to tell me that that volume is to be closed, I find, to my sorrow and regret, that its fair pages are blotted by many a word that ought not to have been spoken and by many a deed that ought not to have been done. I find the tendency to sin so strong in me that it is requisite that I should endeavor, not for a time, but for all time, to keep myself subjected to the will of a higher power, and if I would entirely dedicate myself to the service of God I have no slight task before me, rather one which will require the whole limit of my endurance and the most unceasing inspiration of my better nature. I must not let the reins loose on the back of that wild horse for a single moment; I must have him in absolute subjection, then he will draw the load to the glory of God. But, brethren, when I become a Christian, conscious of this fact, I do not lose the scientific instinct or the instinct of a philosopher, that would seek for an effect from a cause, or who would run from a cause to discover an effect. Christianity is not

A MATTER OF SENTIMENT.

The plan of God respecting man's salvation is so broad, so profound, that it would tax the intellectual powers of the loftiest genius to comprehend it in its fullest extent. Religion does not consist of mere ebullitions of emotion, it is not built as a structure on the shifting sands of uncertainty, it is founded on the eternal rock of the fitness of things, and can be subjected to any mental test and measured by any intellectual standpoint by which the world desires to try it. And from that standpoint I look on my sins and ask myself, What shall I do with them? That I have committed them is not to be doubted; that my purposes have been drawn to the earth by the weight of unworthy deeds is not to be questioned; that I sit in sackcloth and ashes from time to time no honest man will question. Brethren, what am I to do with that past? with that accumulation of broken laws—divine laws—broken and shattered wilfully by me? What can I do with the past? If exact justice were done me what would be my fate? It does not require a prophet to foresee the future—that I should be discovered in the prison house of God's indignation, chained to the dungeon wall, as a fitting penalty of my thoughtless and careless as well as of my carefully planned iniquities. Is there any man who can tell me how to get rid of a sin he has committed, or how to rid his soul of the consequences that follow the deed? Brethren, we are dealing now not with sentiment, but with law, and I answer, God, the omnipotent, has no power there. Why? For this reason, and you can see it as plainly as the daylight. Government is based on obedience, and if there is such a thing as pardon, except under given conditions in the executive, then, brethren, it is not government. You could not carry on the government of New York city for twenty-four hours if the Governor of the State or the Mayor of the city had the right to say, should the whim take him, that the prison house at Auburn shall be emptied of its offenders, and the Tombs door shall be opened and the inmates go free. The only reason why you are secure within your house is in the fact that the criminal and the punishment go together. Weakness in him who sits aloft is weakness all through; and if in his softer moments he has the power to sign pardons—brethren, your courts are good for nothing, your judges might as well descend from the bench, for government is only the caprice of a moo and not the protection of a people. I think I can safely say that, except under given conditions, and those strict ones, there is no such thing as pardon for guilt that has been committed. I want to state that plainly, not on my authority as a minister, but on my authority as a man of sense; and I make the assertion to you, not on the standpoint of the Bible, but of philosophy and science, you are absolutely disabled from rubbing out a single act of the past or its consequences. But, you say, "suppose I repent?" Yes. That brings me to the second statement—regret. If you do not repent you would go on in your iniquities; your repentance is a check to that, and therefore

THE MOST IMPORTANT STEP

you can take. Indeed, you are lost unless you repent. Repentance, dear friends, affects the future, but it cannot affect the past. Though you weep, you cannot crush the memory of yesterday. Repentance can clothe you in white for to-morrow, but it cannot take off the black garments of yesterday.

These are the two facts I want to bring to your attention at first; and now let me take a leap to another standpoint. I'll take you back 1,800 years and stand for a few moments on the wall of Jerusalem, looking south. We see the Garden of Gethsemane, and a little to the east we see the cedar wood of the cross and the Nazarene hanging thereon. I look at that picture, and one or two facts come to my mind. The first is that it is the greatest anomaly that history presents. It is a strange contradiction in the providence of God. There was nothing like it from the time of Adam to that moment, and there has been nothing like it from that moment to to-day. It stands alone by the principle by which it is governed.

To my surprise I find, when I ask, that He is punished not for any crime, but for His innocence. Not even His bitterest enemies could utter a word against Him. He was noted for the good things He did; always compassionate and kind, gentle and loving, always uplifting the oppressed, His only characteristic love of right and hatred of wrong; and I may say, without fear of contradiction, that of all men that ever lived Jesus Christ hated wrong the most; that of all men ever born of women Jesus Christ lived the purest life none will gainsay, and yet the most innocent man that ever lived is the one chosen by the everlasting providence of a good God to bear the inconceivable anguish and pain. Brethren, I present to you a problem for thought. I care not whether you be theologian or philosopher; I present to you an enigma, which no human being thus far has been able to solve. The only being who loved the world intensely died a death of disgrace. God's law is punishment for criminals, but here is innocence and punishment. Strange anomaly! Marvellous problem! What does it mean?

Once more I see Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. If He is only a man whose death is necessary to the proper period of a glorious life, then let me say

THE DEATH WAS UNWORTHY OF THE MAN.

That is a strange thing; but, brethren, there have been others who have died more nobly than Christ, if He was only a man. St. Peter died with a song on his lips; but Calvary is only sighs of anguish. Tell me, my thoughtful brethren, do you think such a life as Jesus' could falter at the last moment if He was only a man? Jesus, in the Garden of Gethsemane, as a man was a failure; it was not a triumphant entry into the land of shadows. He could not say, as the psalmist says, "Though I walk through the valley and the shadow of death I will fear no evil," for He shrunk from the evil. What does it mean? Could He not die as He lived? What is the trouble? Ah! brethren, as a man Jesus Christ died poorly; but as one ordained by God to bear the accumulated guilt of the world, He died as no man ever died. He died like a God—divine justice in His death, the penalty of the world's sins on His shoulders, and no wonder that from that brow great drops of blood were drawn.

Friends, it seems to me we are getting into the subject. I present first the picture of man's guilt, and now the scene in Gethsemane as an answer. If we turn to the Bible as a book of common law you will find the connection between the fact I have stated and the picture I present. John says, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world," and Christ sayst whosoever believeth on Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life; and at the last, "For this cause came I unto this hour," as though it was the climacteric of God's eternal plan, beginning in Eden and ending in millennium. And again, "If I be lifted up I will draw all men unto me." Paul says, "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous," and all through the book Christ is spoken of as the

PROPITIATION FOR OUR SINS

on one hand and a ransom for us on the other, and I find a close relationship between my sinfulness and the picture on the top of Calvary.

"But," says some one, "how is it that one man can suffer for another?" I do not know how, but we find the fact illustrated in our everyday life. I only carry it to an extreme, and say Christ not only suffered for us, but He suffered in our stead. Some one says, "It seems just that every one should have his own deserts." It seems so, and yet it is not so. The fact of God's having mercy on us is evidence that we are not treated according to our deserts. The question is, How shall we get hold of this mercy? It must be a difficult thing, I think. If God had made it hard to be saved, then all would try to be saved; but God has said, "Whosoever will, let he thirst, shall come to the fountain and drink, and there shall be a fountain within them and they never shall thirst more." It strikes me that Calvary is the historical expression of the wrath of the Almighty at the presence of sin, and instead of our being on that cross we look and behold an innocent man is there. Innocence for my guilt! You and I can come to that cross and drop our burdens, and may say, "Christ, my father, my guide, my teacher, my prophet, my being, my God." We can say all this, and in men's consciences Calvary is like a mountain instead of a little sandy hill. We can lay ourselves down at the foot of the cross to die, while, as Elijah did, we ascend in the chariot of God's immortality. We are caught up to bliss and glory, and we shall stand around the throne, and our song shall be, "Glory be to the lamb that was slain!"

MASONIC TEMPLE.

IS CATHOLICISM OR PROTESTANTISM THE BEST?—THE CATHOLIC RELIGION DISSECTED BY REV. O. B. FROTHINGHAM.

The Rev. O. B. Frothingham preached yesterday morning to a very large congregation on the relative merits of Protestantism and Catholicism. The week just ended, he said, has witnessed a very strange ceremonial for this New World, that of bestowing upon an American archbishop the rank of a cardinal. By this an American citizen was made a prince, only inferior to a king and invested with an authority second only to that of the Supreme Pontiff. It was a curious congregation that witnessed this ceremonial, some attracted by idle curiosity, others lovers of music and pageantry, and others again afraid that this new institution might be subversive of American liberty. What was the object of those who went to the Cathedral to glory in this new power of the Catholic Church? Was it the hope to make Rome still more powerful in this country? I, for my part, have no fear that Rome will ever succeed in establishing a religious absolutism in the United States. America will do more damage to Rome than Rome can possibly do to America.

IS IT A CHURCH FOR TO-DAY?

It has been frequently said that the Roman religion, above all others, has all those qualities which enchain the mind and fascinate the senses of the devout. Is it true? Wipe out all the stains of the past, admit that it is innocent of the charges of cruelty, bigotry, &c.—the question still remains, "Is it a Church for to-day for America?" I stand here, not as a Protestant, not as a rationalist, but simply one who believes in American ideas and institutions, and as such I ask, "Does the Catholic Church stimulate or hinder the genius of the American nation?"

THE DANGERS OF SYMBOLISM.

In the first place we are told that the Roman Church, above all others, brings down the divine reality to this earth, which the severe intellectuality of the Protestant faith cannot accomplish. Protestantism tries to fill up the mind with pictures of saintliness but Catholicism fills the very skies with them, and the churches and the oriel windows of its cathedrals blaze with the images of saints. It is a church of the senses. I do not say that it substitutes the symbol for the Deity. Still is it a good thing to have a symbolical religion? Could it ever be possible for the uneducated to see through the symbol to the Deity? Never. Unless the idol is repeatedly shattered the symbol becomes the Deity. The Chinaman upbraids his deity when his prayer has been denied, marks the image and throws it on the dunghill. When his fortune becomes more prosperous he picks the painted idol up from the dunghill and says: "I beg your pardon." (Laughter.) I do not say that it is as bad as this in the Catholic Church, out again and again I have stood in the proudest cathedrals of Europe and listened to the most mechanical worship in an unintelligible language. As I approached these devout kneeling figures they reached out their hands, and the devotee revealed himself as the mendicant.

THE MODEL INTELLECTUAL FAITH.

Read the history of Israel—one of the most wonderful histories you can read—and you will find that its leader made it one of his first teachings to warn his people against idolatry. And this tribe has weathered the Middle Ages and all Christendom could not put them down, and to-day the Jewish faith is the most purely intellectual in the modern world. Why? Because the Jews acknowledge that it is the soul which must worship God in itself, but not through gilded pictures and symbols.

It is said that the Catholic religion is pre-eminently that of beauty, that it has the cathedral, all the pomp and glory of color, and that Protestantism is bald and naked. Friends, did the Roman Church create these artistic beauties? No, they were due to the old pagan faith. The finest works of art were produced when this old pagan spirit broke through the Catholic Church. Remember also the miserable dirty embellishments which the religion has put there, the tawdry shrines, the dabbs decked out as Madonnas, the tinselled altar for which Catholicism is responsible, too, and beauty may be bought too dearly. If you must pay liberty for it it certainly is too costly. Could any beauty recompense us for the possibility of a Napoleon III.? Yes, let us have beauty by all means. For my part I wish that Protestantism could clothe itself with art more divine, music more expressive than Catholicism could ever boast, but I would rather have the smallest hall, the poorest congregation than the most gorgeous decorations and the greatest pomp of color and sound unaccompanied by sincerity, fervor and truth. Truth comes before beauty.

"REST" IN THE CHURCH.

The religion of Rome is commended still more warmly as being pre-eminently one of the heart and one that holds all mankind to its capacious bosom, while Protestantism is a faith of the head only. A very noble woman joining the Catholic Church said to me, "Now I am at home; I have found my mother; I have found rest." The word "rest" is so delicious to sentimental, weak people; it is so pleasant to them to be able to go to sleep under the aegis of the Church. A religion that puts the heart to sleep, lulling its doubts and freeing it from the pangs of remorse—this seems to be the idea of the best religion, one that people can "turn on" as they could the water from a reservoir. How sweet an idea is this that no sparrow falls down without the will of the rather! And but it does fall. The hawk pursues it, the shot of the marksman brings it down bleeding. We must think of a Father who is in harmony with universal laws; we must allow for the fall of the sparrow as well as for its flight.

I would add my testimony, however, to the infinitude of good and noble deeds which the Catholic Church has done. Tongue cannot tell the praise of it. But the idea from which these deeds proceeded was that men were to be covered with mercy and to be sheltered from trouble and work. This was making children of men, but the true heart of a religion is that which puts a heart into men. Those men in America who lifted up the poor African and said, "Take off the shackles"—have they no heart? Those young heroes who went down to the front of the battle, taking their lives into their hands, ready to face death for a pure, noble principle—had they no heart? The people who are now trying to lift up woman—have they no heart? It is not the faith which suffocates the heart with incense but that which sends it out stronger and more hopeful of doing good which is the noblest.

THE CHURCH WITH AUTHORITY.

A young man told me once that he had joined the Catholic Church in order to put his mind at rest. If we want authority, however, why go to the Church? If you want to stop thinking can you not be satisfied with your mother's teachings and remain a Methodist or Presbyterian or whatever you may be? After all, how unreasonable is this claim of the Catholic Church to authority! If we wish for authority anywhere should it not be as to how we could save our children from sickness, how pestilence, war and pauperism could be averted? And yet these questions are never answered, and nobody pretends to be able to answer them infallibly. And the very people who are content to leave these earthly problems alone want to solve far higher, more subtle and infinitely more difficult ones. To decide the design of this universe, science, poetry and mystic feeling must come in. As we do not want authority we want aid. The assumption of the Catholic Church to authority is fatal to the energy of thought. Is it not the highest of all aims to teach men to think? Are our lives not decided by our powers of thinking?

One word more and I have done. It is said that our age is drifting toward black materialism; that a rage for money, a lust for distinction, &c., prevails, and that Catholicism is the only bar to this tendency of the modern world. We are told that this splendidly drilled organization, with its hierarchy of priests—the master and mistress of all majesty and awe—all earned by centuries of hard work—presents to the senses the eternal realities; that it obliges the king to kneel and to unbosom his conscience to a brighter conscience; that it arrests the criminal and shields the outcast. It is a beautiful picture, but the real question before us is whether it is worth while to imprison in the receptacle of the Church—of any church—the intellectual and moral possibilities of men. To make this world religious, to make men and women worshippers, to make them all priests in their own hearts—not to separate the world from the Church, but to make every fireside in the world a temple of justice, beauty and wisdom—this is the true problem of to-day. To make the little schoolgirl feel that in discharging her duties at home she is fulfilling her religious duty to the world is better than to hold her to her prayers. Not to say, "May thy kingdom come," but to

MAKE ONE KINGDOM IN EVERY LIFE

and in every house. Is not this the true problem? Therefore it is that we protest against priests, because each should be his own priest; and if this is the true problem, then, to say that the Catholic Church takes all the sanctity out of the world to exhibit it more beautifully in itself, is to pour upon it final condemnation. I would rather see a fraternity of men on the simplest possible terms, and no church at all, than to see the grandest religion where fraud and dishonesty and self-disrespect were allowed to remain. Make life religious and then your religion is your own.

ST. ANN'S CHURCH.

The devotion of the forty hours' adoration was commenced yesterday morning at St. Ann's church, East Twelfth street, when a solemn high mass was celebrated, Rev. Thomas F. Lynch being celebrant, Rev. William C. Poole, deacon, and Rev. Mr. Prendergast, sub-deacon. The Very Rev. T. S. Preston, V. G., gave a short instruction at the end of the mass on the nature of the devotion of the forty hours' exposition. A procession was then formed, in which the cross-bearers and acolytes and about one hundred little girls, dressed in white, carrying lighted tapers, took part. The Very Rev. T. S. Preston came last in the procession, bearing the blessed sacrament, which was deposited in a tabernacle beautifully ornamented and surrounded with a number of lighted tapers.

The mass sung was the First Mass of Mr. Louis Dachauer, the organist, and was well rendered under the leadership of the author. The singers were Miss Cowadi, soprano; Miss Gormen, alto; Mr. Phlenger, tenor, and Mr. Blum, basso.

THE MONTH OF MARY.

Yesterday being the first Sunday of the month which the Catholic Church has dedicated to the memory of the Virgin Mary, her altars and statues in the different Catholic churches were decorated with much taste. The ladies of the different parishes seem to vie with one another in weaving flowers into bouquets and wreaths and garlands with which to beautify "our lady's" shrines. Among the churches which displayed exceptional taste in the decorations were St. Stephen's, St. Ann's, St. Francis Xavier's, St. Gabriel's and the churches of the Epiphany and Holy Innocents. At the high mass in St. Stephen's Xini's grand festival mass in D minor was given by the choir in fine style and at the close the organist, Mr. Danforth, played a grand *toccata* by Bach in such a manner that the congregation lingered to listen to the inspiring strains.

PLYMOUTH CHURCH.

MR. BEECHER ON FOLLOWING GOD IN LOVE—MAY DAY COMMUNION.

Yesterday was communion service Sabbath and the time appointed for the reception into Plymouth church of those persons who have applied for admission and have been approved during the past two months. There was a tremendous rush of people to hear Mr. Beecher and to witness the simple ceremonies of receiving new communicants and the administration of the sacraments of eucharist and baptism. Notwithstanding this fact, fewer people entered the church than have gone into it upon a Sabbath morning since the previous communion service. Much of the space between the platform upon which Mr. Beecher strides during his sermons and the pews, which is generally filled up with temporary seats for visitors, was occupied by a rectangular table covered with a white cloth upon which were some wine ewers and chalices of silver, and some silver salvers, upon which numerous small cubes of bread were deftly made to form larger cubes. In the middle of this table was a long, slender vase of crystal glass, out of which rose a cluster of satin-breasted white lilies. The platform was handsomely adorned with bouquets and beds of flowers, lilies, Japanese and calla, orchids in numerous varieties, passion flowers and many other horticultural beauties, among which vines and ferns were skilfully interwoven. All the combination of flowers were wrought with exquisite taste.

The services began with Zundel's music to St. Ambrose's hymn, "Te Deum Laudamus," which was rendered with good effect by the choir.

RECRUITS FOR PLYMOUTH.

After several hymns were sung Mr. Beecher read out the names of 105 persons who had been passed upon by the church and who were waiting to be admitted into the Plymouth fold. These persons occupied the first three rows of pews in front of the pastor's platform. Thirty-five of them had been received on letters from other churches of which they had been members, while the remaining seventy were about to become regular church members for the first time. When Mr. Beecher had ended reading the names of the applicants he called upon the seventy inexperienced persons to rise and to avow their acceptance of that covenant with God which is the basis of every Christian church. This having been done, he asked those persons who had not as yet been baptized to step out of their pews into the space before the platform, where he would administer the sacrament to them. Twenty-seven men, women and youths responded to this call. Mr. Beecher stood at the right side of the platform, behind a low kneeling-stool. At his right hand stood a deacon of the church, holding a wooden vase, bound with silver. Each person to be baptized walked to where Mr. Beecher stood and knelt on the stool before him, while he sprinkled his or her forehead with water and uttered the words, "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Ghost. Amen." When the baptisms were done the pastor called upon all the applicants for admission to Plymouth church to rise, and having heard the covenant of membership to indicate whether or not they would subscribe to it, he then called upon the members of Plymouth church to rise, in token that they accepted fellowship with the new comers.

THE SERMON.

Mr. Beecher preached for a shorter time than usual. His text was from the fifth chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, first and part of the second verse:—"Be ye, therefore, followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ hath also loved us," &c. He repeated the text and then said:—The figure of following may be drawn from any of several sources. A soldier follows his leader, and so in Scripture the figure of following is sometimes drawn from that fact. So do scholars follow their teachers, and in the Oriental custom this is literal. But here the figure is drawn from the manner of little children, and no image could be more affecting or more perfect. We are to follow God as little children. He must appear to us as a father, else we cannot do this. If we conceive God to be a being of forceful coercion, one sitting ever conscious of His own purity, and demanding absolute purity from all created beings, we cannot follow Him in the moods of little children. A child will follow anxiously, with all the expressions of truthful love, a kind mother or a benignant father, but will not willingly and with joy run after a parent stern and gloomy. And so, if we would follow God as little children, we must have faith in Him as a perfect father. We must not think of Him as a being enshrined in a church; as one not represented by any human image. We must conceive a God who is the centre of

AN OCEAN OF LOVE,

and move after such a one, walking in love as we go. We are just now hearing from the numerous scientific expeditions which were sent out from every civilized country to observe the transit of Venus. Some of these expeditions did not succeed. The weather obscured everything they wanted to see from their sight and overthrew the labor of months, perhaps of years. With others the clouds played coquette, now obscuring, now discovering the sky. The watchers caught glimpses now and then of what they had come to see in full, and, though they returned home wiser than before, they yet went away dissatisfied. Still other parties of observers saw the whole phenomenon—the approach of the planet to the glowing orb of the sun, the contact, the passage of the first across the face of the second, and its final exit into the further space. The atmosphere was clear, and everything was ready. So it is with God. We cannot learn so as to follow Him with proper sentiments unless we look through the clear atmosphere of love.

"If," said Mr. Beecher, "you desired to show how any eminent man appears, you would not be likely to paint an eye on one sheet, the second eye on another sheet, a mouth on a third, a chin and a nose on yet different pages, and then say these combined are the representatives of that man. No man who derives his idea of God from mere intellectuality has the true conception of Him." Continuing the development of his statement that Christians, in reference to God, must adopt the ways of children in reference to their kindly parents, the preacher said:—"To live constantly depressed by a sense of one's evil ways dwelling on and enstewing them, as it were, is not wholesome. Little children do not do this. They do not dwell upon their weakness and their ignorance. They are loving, trustful and reliant upon whomsoever they love, and follow. But the teaching of a blind and abject reverence is not right. We should not tremble before God as before a tyrant. We are not members of a church to be awe-smitten. Yet there is a certain love-fear which is properly felt in the presence of God. You are

THE DEAR CHILDREN OF GOD,

and as such you are to walk in joy and love and trust.

Mr. Beecher continued his sermon by speaking pertinently to the admission of so many new members into Plymouth church, and by saying:—"Did it never occur to you that Jesus Christ, who is supposed to have founded the Christian Church, was never a member of it, or that the twelve apostles, who are called the pillars of the Church, were never members of it? Christ was a member of the Jewish Church. You are not to join yourself to a church from any poetic sense, nor from any sentiment except that of great love to God. You are not safe because you are within a church, any more than a child is learned because it goes to school. Should I disparage the Church, who am its minister? Should I disparage it, who have for years participated in its benefits? The Church is only beneficial to you because it helps you to see God rightly. What would we think of an astronomer who sat by the side of his telescope, praising its mechanism and the skill of its maker, but never looking through it? The Church is God's telescope, and through it you may be enabled to see Him and His glories, His beneficent love and kindness. If you belong to a church which does not open to you a view of God, but which is opaque, it is useless to you. You are then merely a churchman. Many of you here are only entering upon Christian lives, and I do not want you to become merely members of a church."

Mr. Beecher now gave a general invitation to all who felt in the proper mood to partake of the communion bread and wine, saying, in support of his invitation, "The Church does not own the Lord's Supper any more than it owns the Bible, and therefore I make my invitation s broad."

A large number of persons remained after the regular services were over and partook of the sacrament of the Eucharist, in accordance with Mr. Beecher's invitation, and at its conclusion each of the new communicants received a sprig of the flowers which had adorned the platform.

TRINITY CHURCH.

A LESSON FROM PETER'S LIFE—THE NEW HYMNAL.

The services yesterday in Trinity church were conducted by a large body of clergymen with attendant choristers. The space within the railings was brilliantly illuminated and the music was particularly excellent. The congregation, which was large, differed from what usually assembles in other places of worship, for it principally consisted of men who, by their exterior, plainly manifested devotional feelings. The chanting of the ministers was very affecting. The hymns and selected pieces as rendered by the choir with the volume of two organs added had a most impressive effect. The revised hymnal as set forth by the last General Convention went into use for the first time yesterday.

The sermon was preached by Rev. Dr. Dix, who took his text from John, xxi., 18—"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest; out when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not." Dr. Dix went into an examination of the character of Simon Peter, the oldest, in respect to years, of the apostles, and drew from it a lesson that he forcibly pressed upon the congregation—namely, the merit of being patient, free from anger and humble. Peter, though one of the chosen, had many faults; out, nevertheless, he was devoted to Christ, and as he advanced to the end of his earthly career showed the clear and open path to Christ's kingdom.

CHURCH OF THE COVENANT.

SERMON BY THE REV. ARTHUR MITCHELL, OF CHICAGO.

The Rev. Arthur Mitchell, of Chicago, preached an eloquent and impressive sermon yesterday morning in the Church of the Covenant (Presbyterian), Park avenue, corner of Thirty-fifth street. The congregation was a large and attentive one. The text was taken from the first chapter of the Book of Ruth, and the thirteenth verse, in the words:—"Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God."

The preacher said, in substance, that this little Book of Ruth is full of the rosy fragrance of filial affection and steadfastness in the paths of duty and of virtue. It is the story of a young Moabitish woman; the history of her love and journeyings in the land of Moab, and her return to Judah. When her husband died in the land of Moab Naomi resolved to retrace her weary steps with Ruth and Orpah, her two daughters-in-law, and go again to the country of the Israelites. She vividly pictured to the two Moabitish women the fatigues and sacrifices which both would have to make in following the steps of their mother-in-law.

ORPAH REPENTS

and returns to the land of Moab, her native place, and to the idols there worshipped; but the steadfast, faithful Ruth hung upon Naomi's neck beseeching her in no wise to let her daughter go, saying, in the words of the text, "Whither thou goest I will go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge; thy people shall be my people and thy God my God." Ruth, true to the best instincts of the human heart, sought labor wherewith to aid her beloved Naomi, and she gleaned in the fields of Boaz. Her goodness and strength of heart begat love for her in the breasts of others, and from her sprang David, the great King of Israel, from whom is descended the Son of Man, even Christ. It was love, the purest and most unselfish sentiment of the human mind, that guided Ruth to these great things. In her love to Naomi she learned faith in God. How often has not the calm and holy solace of gentle, truthful Naomi, shed its influence on and mercifully fixed itself in the minds of those about it? It is the heart, not reason, that first feels God. All the sophistical intrenchments in which men fortify themselves by unbelief have often surrendered at the summons of one gentle voice and lovely disposition. Men are not to be converted by reason alone, but by appeals to their better natures of love and faith. Gentle mothers are the ordinary missionaries of God's own hand. There are no ministers whose converts are so numerous as those of loving daughters, gentle sisters or affectionate wives. How often has not man been recalled from sin by the voice of a mother? Fewer things are more difficult to resist than the loving appeals from a dear one's lips.

THE MOTHER'S LOVE,

soft and touching, is, above all other things, irresistible in its appeals to our faith. We see men in everyday life who followed the example of Ruth's sister, who, when called upon to endure hardships and make sacrifices in the cause of duty, drew back and went away from the right path. Orpah's resolution failed her, and she turned back to her own people and their idolatrous gods. She was like unto the rich young man who saw and loved Christ. He had kept all the commandments, but would not sell his great possessions, take up the cross and follow our divine Master. He desired salvation, but would not pay the price which it cost; so he went away sorrowful and would not part with his vast earthly possessions for life everlasting hereafter. He, like many others, could almost kiss Christ, while leaving Him was sad within himself, for he and they, like Ruth's sister, had not courage to follow the true path. If Ruth had not continued faithfully at the side of her loved Naomi, David had not lived to sing his immortal songs of praise and glory to God and to Israel. The glorious example of this young Moabitish woman who left country and kindred for the sake of a sacred love and holy faith, may well be placed side by side with that of the patriarch Abraham, when he left his own people and went out into the wilderness to

SEEK THE TRUE GOD.

Her example is like unto those of the holy Saints James and John, who left everything—even abandoning ships on the sea—to follow Jesus. How lifelike, how beautiful are the words:—"So they two went, until they came to Bethlehem. And it came to pass when they were come to Bethlehem that all the city was moved about them, and they said:—'Is this Naomi?'" They passed a desert road, which terminated in abundance at the green fields of Bethlehem. They had arrived at a haven of rest after passing a tiresome journey in sweet converse and mutual intermingling of souls by the way. In the end their love, faith and steadfastness in the true path were rewarded, and the words of Christ amply verified when he said that if a man leave his house and friends for His sake and the Gospel's he would receive reward a hundredfold, even life everlasting. This sublime example of the youthful Ruth should ever be present in the minds of young people. Her firmness and resolution on the borders of the land of Moab ought to be ever before their mind's eye. They must be resolved that no hope of future comfort, wealth or happiness derivable from marriage shall swerve them from the side of the Lord. If others turn away from God and go back to the world's wickedness, as did Orpah to the idols of Moab, do not you do so also. Be faithful to your own convictions and true to the true God. Forget thine own people and country and cleave unto the Lord, for He alone is your God.

CHURCH OF THE DIVINE PATERNITY.

THE WAY TO ATTAIN RIGHTEOUSNESS—SERMON BY THE REV. E. H. CHAPIN.

Rev. E. H. Chapin preached, taking his text from Matthew, v., 6—"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled." First, he began, I wish to draw your attention to the condition of the beatitude and then to the strength of the beatitude. The spiritual condition referred to in the text is that of hunger, and it is a hunger that must be satisfied. Hunger is one of those terrible instincts that makes the brute predominate in man. This thing, appetite, holds despotic power over the human soul. In Coleridge's picture of the "Ancient Mariner" in that sunlit vessel, still as "a painted ship upon a painted ocean," we have the power of intense thirst. If one would have his spiritual desires satisfied he must long for righteousness. He must read the whole Sermon on the Mount. They came to Jesus seeking honors in His kingdom, and that sermon was, as it were, a dissipation of all such desires. Jesus showed them their true needs. Would it not seem startling if a person such as Jesus Christ was should go on Broadway or into Wall street and use words like these in our text to those whom he found there striving for millions and for all kinds of earthly pleasure? It is not saying

"I LOVE GOD,"

that answers to this question of beatitude; it essentially needs hungering and thirsting for. We must turn our attention to what is considered righteousness. We speak of a righteous man as an upright man. But it means more than this. No virtue can be absolutely single, for this quality is only perfect by the light of all the rest. We may think a man can entertain one virtue and be otherwise corrupt. Is a man honest when he is selfish? Without all the virtues one virtue is limited and lacks power. The word "righteousness" means the spirit out of which all good qualities and acts emerge. A great many people pray for righteousness; how many are willing to work for it? A desire for being righteous—that is what the prayer is for—and to be like God and obey His will is what it means. The goodness of God and the righteousness of God are exemplified in the character of Jesus Christ. Such is the condition of the beatitude set forth in the text. In regard to the nature of it he who longs for righteousness and goodness shall be filled with them—that is, they will be adapted to his nature. But in another sense he is never satisfied, but is always longing for more. What are you seeking for in religion, and what are you going to church for? You are seeking for heaven, you say.

WHAT IS HEAVEN?

A place we shall come to by and by, when we have no more powers of earthly enjoyment. Then you are seeking heaven, as you call it, not seeking for goodness and righteousness, but for something else. You are simply seeking heaven for some outward good—to escape hell. What is eternal life? Some men are crying out, "Let us have eternal life!" To know God and Jesus Christ is the eternal life. It is the essence of all other possessions man could desire. With this man has all substantial good. Man is a being of limitless nature. The only thing that can satisfy him is the assimilation to God in the goodness of God. Let us consider the nature of the thing to which we are aspiring, and whence this aspiration. We are living in an age when men are trying to tell us that there is no creative intelligence as the foundation of things. According to these materialistic conclusions we are a world of mere atoms. If so, whence came the idea of goodness and whence comes this aspiration? The aspirations of goodness and the lives of good men refute these materialistic ideas.

A SPIRITUAL CONFERENCE.

CONVENTION AT THE HARVARD ROOMS—ANDREW JACKSON DAVIS AS A HINDOO.

It was the old story, and there was no mistaking the congregation. A mild young man, with a very suspicious nicety in the parting of his hair, to say nothing of the meek expression of his mouth in accepting ten cents per head from the visitors to the Harvard rooms yesterday, ushered in four dozen persons, some of them evidently curiosity seekers. The occasion was understood to be a ladies' spiritual conference, and a very nice conference it would have been but for the fact that the ladies could not agree. In the first place, Mrs. Ewer, who presided, had certain views in reference to the ladies and gentlemen in the other world which she set forth in a very emphatic way. Her observations were certainly worth the money charged for admission, as they were brief and not destitute of humor. The panoramic part of the show consisted of a few hideous looking daubs, representing the faces of defunct persons, whose ghosts, it was alleged, appeared to a medium. The audience included a few

OLD MEN WITH LONG HAIR,

glassy eyes, thin mouths, ethereal frames and shabby overcoats. Mrs. Beach opened the proceedings and gave an interesting account of a ghost, whose portrait was exhibited. It was to be regretted, however, that all the pictures had a peculiarly gloomy expression, most of the individuals represented appearing to have been landed from Noah's ark without a check for baggage. There was a perfect flutter when Mrs. Jewett took the stand. She is a very heavy lady, weighing perhaps over 200 pounds, speaks well, frowns fiercely, believes in ghosts, emphasizes manfully and does not care a cent for all the theology in the world. Mrs. Jewett had a charming way of standing on her toes and coming down at every period on her heels with good effect. She had scarcely resumed her seat, however, when Mrs. Beach called attention to the fact that the picture which had been referred to by Mrs. Jewett as that of a Hindoo was no such thing, but a perfect portrait of Andrew Jackson Davis. Miss Goodwill next related her experience. She was at first very timid. After a while, however, she summoned a spirit, unfortunately a wretched grammarian, who had certainly never served at a spelling match, and informed the assemblage that she had been dead some time, but had now returned, and intended to perform that which she failed to accomplish before her death. Then Mrs. Stryver did the best she could to interest the audience, and following her was an old woman, who seemed to have spinal complaint, but who nevertheless gave the audience the worth of their money. Mrs. Slocum brought the exercises to a termination.

MOODY AND SANKEY.

ADDRESS BY DR. MACLOSKIE AT ASSOCIATION HALL.

Professor Macloskie, of Princeton College, made an address last evening in Association Hall, on the "Revival in Ireland, under the labors of Messrs. Moody and Sankey." The main idea of the affair was that the speaker would speak from personal observations while with Mr. Moody. After prayer and the singing of hymns the Professor took his text from the chapter in The Acts referring to the work of the Apostles in Samaria. He said:—The Samaritans were a religious people, but they were unfriendly with the Jews. The two peoples were disassociated by sectarianism and divided in feeling. They had no love for each other. The country I came from—Ireland—has much the same thing to complain of. The people are divided and inimical to each other, and I may say that Christianity in Ireland has suffered because the people believe they are serving God by hating each other. This feeling is wrong. Roman Catholics there are anxious to be religious and they don't know what to believe. They are enveloped in a mental darkness, which prevents them from seeing the good path. I could go over many examples of this ignorance, and Protestants should not abuse those who are doing their best and seeking to go on in God's way. I believe, then, that it is only the result of wrestling with that Church which is keeping them in darkness. We should not despise these, but stretch out our hand to them. Remember Christ and the woman of Samaria at the well. She was surprised that a Jew should ask a Samaritan for water. But our blessed Saviour stepped over the line of demarcation. Indeed, He afterward gave His apostles special directions to go to Samaria and preach the Gospel. His heart was warm for this people. His enemies knew it, and reproached him for it. If you have friends upon whom you look indifferently as to their souls look if you have no duty to them. The real spirit of revival must now be cultivated. I will now call your attention to the works of God made manifest in various parts of the world. When I first went to Edinburgh and met at a public meeting some of the most prominent men in the Church I noticed a spirit of coldness which could not be overcome in the audience. I went there again after Mr. Moody had left, and how different did the people behave. It was evident there had been a revivifying influence at work in the meantime. I remember an incident of a doorkeeper who used at first to be annoyed if he could not