SERMONS.

Topics Discussed in Metropolitan Pulpits Yesterday.

JONAH AND THE WHALE.

Operations of the Law of Association and Suggestion.

CHURCH OF THE DISCIPLES.

A PERSONAL GOD—SERMON BY REV. DR. HEPWORTH.

Dr. Hepworth preached yesterday morning on "A Personal God." His text was selected from Psalm xc., 2—"Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hast formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God." Mr. Herbert Spencer, said Dr. Hepworth, is certainly in the right when he tells us that God is unknowable. In saying this he does nothing more than paraphrase the words of holy writ. But he is as certainly wrong when he asserts that because God is unknowable we may regard Him with utter indifference. All who have thoughtfully passed through strange vicissitudes have learned that in that one word, "God," the destinies and the hopes of the human soul are given. It is the miraculous source of all our motives for the present time and all our aspirations toward the future. Blot that one word out of the human conscience and you would change the world into a desert at once, over whose hot sands it would be more than torture to walk. But write that one word in letters of light on the human character and you have all possible tropical fruit, fulness and splendor. I have been reading with great care the essays of Mr. Eckel, of whom I have spoken to you on this platform before. He was one of the theorists who are seeking to account for the universe without God. As I have conned his blind arguments I have said to him, in imagination, "But, my dear friend, you are arguing my soul out of me. If what you say is true then the baldest errors of the most blind delusions are better than this fact and truth of yours. I would rather believe everything than believe nothing. I would rather worship the blind forces of nature and erect statues to them, as they did in Greece, than look abroad upon this beautiful world in its many colored splendor and see nothing at all to worship." If I look into my soul carefully I find that I have an aptitude for worship, a craving to go down on my knees in the presence of some one who is superior to myself, and longings that lead me on to something or some one who is better and brighter than myself. It is the instinct of my nature. If I cannot find satisfaction for that habit the good, bright and superior elements of my character are seared at once. I am turned back on myself and I feel myself injured in the inner parts.

THE HABIT OF PRAYER.

Now, whence comes the habit that all of us have, morning and evening, of thanking God for what He has given us—of blessing Him for revealing Himself to us as our God, our Protector and our Redeemer? There are days in the life of man when he calls upon God; times when the soul pierces through the darkness of a great bereavement and looks for Him, though it may not see Him; when our trembling lips cry out into the blackness to one who is near, and one who is the buoy that shows us the light and tells us the way into the harbor. That habit chance did not give us. Throughout this world of ours there is no intelligence. For my present purpose I do not care whether you call it a personal God or whether you look upon it as a pantheistic element. If that intelligence did put that habit in the soul and then afterward deliberately denied its gratification, whose God is the most acceptable? You are on the two horns of a dilemma, and you must make your choice. You must either look to a personal God, who is a personal father, or accept an intelligence. I have no right to assume that you do not believe in a personal God whom you address as "Our Father, thou art in heaven." Dr. Hepworth then described the eternity of the existence of God, and commented on our blindness when trying to apprehend the significance of that word. He also referred to God at work. That, he said, was a wonderful phrase; it expressed the greatest truth in the world, and one that was the most important. This world was made for us by God, as truly as the father builds a house for his son to live in. We were in God's heart before we had existence; He knew us long before we could know Him. These words are eloquent of this when Christ said, "The kingdom, which was prepared before the foundation of the world." If it were true that God made the world for us, and then made us to live in it, it necessarily follows that the position could be gainsaid that God's providence was an essential fact of human life. Young infidelity cannot find a substitute for the love of God any more than it can find a substitute for a mother's love. Prayer was also a great fact. We can talk to God and God will hear us. Because we could pray we could bear the burden of our sorrow. It followed, then, from these facts that all things in this life must ultimate in good. Dr. Hepworth closed by the inquiry as to whether we realized our privileges in this respect, and also by a very pathetic and tender portraiture of the death bed of a Christian who, when asked whether it was all well at sunset, replied, "It is well; but it is not sunset, but sunrise."

PLYMOUTH CHURCH.

THE LAW OF ASSOCIATION—SERMON BY REV. HENRY WARD BEECHER.

At Plymouth Church Mr. Beecher preached on the law of association and suggestion, taking his text, rather remotely as it might seem, from Psalms lxxii., 18, 19—"His name shall endure forever. Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doth wonderful things, and blessed be his glorious name forever." When a thing is presented to our mind, said Mr. Beecher, it produces an immediate impression of itself and a secondary expression by its power of suggestion. Without memory this law of association would be inoperative, there would be no growth of ideas and mankind would not advance a single step in a hundred years. Everything suggests something else or several other things. Human language affords, perhaps, the best illustration. The word *equus* in Latin, horse in English or *cheval* in French suggests a familiar animal, brings it at once before our eyes and other senses. We cannot conceive of a dead symbol blossoming into so much meaning by any law of nature. It is done simply by the law of association. Place has just as powerful an influence in reproducing thoughts and feelings. How much is conveyed to the mind and heart by the sight of any familiar object—one's early home, a familiar tree, a Bible, a place of worship, a room in which one has passed happy or unhappy hours! The object which stood near by, when some great joy or grief overwhelmed the soul, can never be seen without reproducing the original impression more or less strongly. When I look from my bedroom window over at the fort yonder and see the flag run up at sunrise, I see not only the thing itself—I don't think much of that—but my country, my native land stretches out before my eyes, weighted with the scenes of two centuries. The sword is not merely a sword, it is power, then glory. The throne means government, the altar is religion, the crown is not the circlet on the monarch's brow, it is royalty itself, and the cross which was once the symbol of hateful cruelty is now the sign of suffering love and redeeming mercy. Its original meaning has been entirely changed by the law of association and suggestion. The evolutions of this law are infinite, its action universal.

Some remarkable phenomena may be explained by the workings of this law. There are doctrines in whose presence the devotion of many souls is stirred by the strongest emotions, and it is claimed that because holy and beautiful thoughts rise in their mind from the contemplation of these doctrines they are true. But this reason is utterly false. If one has been trained by his parents in the Calvinistic idea of a God of retribution and everlasting damnation he may come to regard that hideous image as something beautiful and holy. There is a law of charity in all this which I want to make plain. It does not follow because a man's creed is hard and barbarous that he himself is hard and stern and bitter. Hard doctrines are like hard rock—the action of the sun and wind and rain softens and relieves their outline in the mind of their possessor.

A PLEA FOR TOLERANCE.

It depends almost altogether on a man's training how he will regard certain ideas and doctrines and observances. Because you do not believe in the purity and efficacy of holy water you are not to laugh at and revile the Catholic who does. Any holy feeling inspired by the law of association is not to be despised—the man who has been taught to feel awed in the presence of a church or an altar is no better than him who has not been taught to take off his hat and tread softly inside the portals of a church. If a man has been brought up by symbols religious ideas will make his mind move more easily through that channel than through any other. If a man is superstitious you are not to ridicule him or condemn him. It is one of the most dangerous things to change the associations of one's childhood. Beware of taking away that which a man has always had without giving him something better in place of it. There are persons of a poetical temperament who can get no good out of a bare, ascetic creed, and many there are of such a mystical temperament that their form of enjoyment is necessarily as sensuous as the clouds. One man says he can worship God best by walking through the woods and fields. I do not doubt there are many such; but there are many more, I fear, who watch the flowing brooks not so much for the sake of the river of life as for the sake of the trout. I know there are men who get more out of their garden than they do out of the Church—men to whom the phenomena of nature speak much better of God than the minister does. If a man wandering in the fields is better than a man in church, blessed be the fields and blessed be the man. To worship God is the chief end, whether it be done symbolically or philosophically or artistically or domestically.

MASONIC TEMPLE.

SOCIAL ILLUSIONS—SERMON BY REV. O. B. FROTHINGHAM.

Mr. O. B. Frothingham preached in Masonic Hall on "Social Illusions." By social illusions, said Mr. Frothingham, I mean the illusions that beset men with regard to the conditions of success in life—those dreams which men are ever following in their waking moments. There is an old saying that life is full of illusions; it has even been said that life is all illusion, and so for the most part it is. Illusion is born of hope and fear, which in reality make up the most part of our lives, or at all events of feeling. Knowledge dispels illusion, but knowledge comes slowly and with much toiling, and there are none of us whose knowledge is so steadfast that it is able to dispel illusion altogether. The traveller through the desert with nothing but the caravan about him, the sky above his head and the burning sands beneath his feet, sees ahead what he takes to be a lake, but as he journeys on finds nothing but sand, and looking back sees what looks like a lake behind. The illusion is his safety. Had he known that what seemed to be a lake before was nothing but sand he would not have hastened on, and did he not know that he had left nothing but sand behind he would be tempted to turn back. And so it is with life. Between memories of the past and hopes of the future we struggle on. We must go forward. Between hope and fear all existence is. Talk about this being the best possible world, it may be so; it certainly is the actual best, but the possibility may be beyond our reach.

ILLUSIONS OF HOPE.

Let us now look at some of these social illusions, and first we will take those illusions of hope. These are in the future, respecting the kingdom of Heaven, the divine Jerusalem that is somehow or other to come down to us out of the clouds. They are dreams of happiness. Who does anything more than wish? There is in the old Hebrew a story of a girl who, having lost her baby, goes to the prophet to ask what to do. "Bring me," said the prophet, "a handful of mustard seed from a house where there has been no death and I will tell you what to do." The girl went from house to house and found plenty of mustard seed, but no house where there was no death. Where is your mustard seed? Oh, there is enough of it, but there is always the dead baby. Yes, and there always will be. Learn that yours is the universal lot. The child is put into the ground and daisies grow upon its grave and tears fill its mother's eyes. Solomon said in much wisdom is much grief, and he was right. As our knowledge expands our acquaintance with sorrow and suffering widens. The sage's head is full of knowledge—knowledge of the wants and miseries and injustice of mankind—but his heart is full of sympathy with their suffering. There is no condition of perfect happiness. Wherever the sun strikes the dew drop there is the rainbow. Where does joy come from? The rain has it not and the wave has it not nor does it belong to any condition of life. Go to the poor man who does his daily task and you will find him oftentimes happier than the rich one. This illusion of happiness is ever teasing us on as the wisp of straw which the farmer holds before his beast. There is the illusion of wealth. People imagine if they had money they could have everything. Yet there never was a rich man; somebody is always richer in the next town or somewhere else. It is not money that we want, but always more money. Wealth brings opportunity, but leaves men and women just as they were before. Taste, knowledge, refinement must be earned by something else. Money opens the door, but something else must give us the strength to go through.

COMMUNISM AND SOCIALISM.

The newspapers are full to-day of prophecies of the dreadful calamities that are to come upon us this summer. The working men are to arm, and Communism and socialism threaten to overturn society. Now, if we consult our reason we can see how absurd all of this is. Communism is the most harmless thing in existence. It is born of religion, and is an attempt to found a new destiny for mankind. It proceeds upon the principle of a common brotherhood, that all are entitled to a share in the blessings of life. The New Testament is full of Communism. Early Christianity was Communistic. The devotees shared everything in common. The monkish establishments of the Church of Rome were Communistic, too. As far as it goes Communism is purely conservative. It is a dream of an ideal existence. Socialism is another thing. It was born not of religion. It is an attempt to realize the principles of the French Revolution and is founded on the idea that all men have equal rights to earth, air and the productions of earth. It aims to have property divided and monopolies broken down. And as these doctrines have been propagated by many different writers there have grown up many different schools of socialism, some of which are very violent and others very peaceful; some of them aiming to tear up society, others only to improve the condition of men. The vilest kind of socialism has already left France. In a convention of workingmen, held in that country this spring, the ideas and principles advocated were such as would have been discarded by socialists. The most violent form has retired to Germany, where the government is despotic. There is nothing of it to speak of in England, because there the ablest men in all positions of life are studying the problem of society and doing their best to answer the questions put by workingmen. And what chance is there for it in America, where everything is democratic, where every one has a little? Those among us who have nothing to care for and nothing to hope for are so few that society has nothing to fear from them. If there is one thing surprises me it is the patience of the poor—their willingness to accept even kind words and gentle thoughts. I see no disposition to insurrection among them, but a disposition only to work themselves, as far as may be, into a practical knowledge of the situation.

FIFTH AVENUE BAPTIST CHURCH.

JESUS AS A POET—SERMON BY REV. DR. ARMITAGE.

The Rev. Dr. Armitage preached in continuation of the subject upon which he discoursed the Sunday previously—namely, "Jesus as a Poet." He took his text from Matthew, vi., 28, in these brief words, "Consider the lilies of the field." The poetic element in Jesus, said the reverend gentleman, calls for the consideration of some points which, humanly speaking, enter into the moulding of His thought and expression. We fall into grave errors as much in losing sight of His proper humanity as when we forget His proper divinity. It is clear enough that as a man like ourselves He was thoroughly influenced by all His surroundings, physical, mental and moral. The Greek poetic classics are filled with figures from cultured life, which moved among the marble of elaborate sculpture and architecture. But no such exquisite human workmanship enters into the compositions of Jesus. His field of thought is beautifully suggested by the text "Consider the lilies of the field;" enter and contemplate the realm of nature. All His utterances carry us back to the land, the day, the scenes in which He lived, embracing their secondary manners and customs, together with the religious sentiments, principles and practices of the Jewish people, and the shades of His own motives, doings and existence. He was thrown into the closest association with all the forms of nature and phenomena, of history and home life, in Palestine. All His words bear evidence that these affected His mind, as similar things do other minds. As the great poets sing of nature, its rivers and mountains, its vales and hills, its seas and skies, so did He; thereby identifying each sentence which fell from His lips with the spirit of all ages. One of the sweetest Biblical studies which any mind could pursue would be to trace the conceptions of His mind in their historic order and to point out His poetic utterances of them in a corresponding imagery, as they asserted their authority, one after another, in His gentle and idyllic nature. Yet we may not attempt this except on a small scale, for the purpose of bringing out this thought without vagueness.

GOD'S TENDER CARE FOR NATURE.

Take, for example, the words of the text, "Consider the lilies of the field." He dropped these words in His Sermon on the Mount, and by them paints a perfect picture of God's tender care for nature, at one stroke. "They toil not, neither do they spin, and yet I say unto you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." The sentence is a poem of grace, purity, trust and beauty in itself. In it you have Nazareth and Capernaum blended. While their enamelled meadows mutually glide under your eye, and their robed plains stretch before you, where the lily smiles in the freshness of the morning dew, three distinct visions burst upon your minds. First, you are carried back to His quiet home, under the roof of Joseph, where you see His lowly mother in her frugal industry plying the distaff, and you hear the hum of the spinning wheel, while the young child wonders at the twisting thread and the growing web in the loom. Then your mind is transported in contrast to the royal palace of Jerusalem, where Solomon is seated on his throne in princely vestments, the tissue of which has been gathered in all lands, and the embroidered folds of which have been wrought by the needlework of Kings' daughters. And then again His climax is reached when He lifts the veil and shows you His heavenly Father presiding day by day and night by night at the delicate creation of the hiyeup, shaping its lines by invisible fringes, drawing its tints by the forces of nature, and arraying its peerless purity in the prisons of star ray and sunlight, so that every individual of the species excels the splendor of Solomon without the spinning of a fibre or the toiling of a hand in the whole process of the unpretending botanic fabric. You may see that the mental law of association was passing Nazareth in memory when He spoke of the man who put his hand to the plough and looked back, or the servant ploughing and feeding cattle—of the sower going forth to sow—of the cockle and darnel mixed with the wheat, and of the angel reaper. The farms of Nazareth opened before Him when He spoke of the hen gathering her brood under her wings to shield her terrified young from the wheeling hawk above them, of the fox which dug a hole in the thicket, of the birds bringing building materials through the air for nests in the branches of the trees, and of the shepherd leaving a flock of ninety and nine in the pasture while he went up into the mountains to seek the stray one and bring him back with joy on his brawny shoulders. But Capernaum and the lake are in mind when He speaks of the toiling fisher casting the drag net and drawing in all kinds, then selecting the good and throwing the bad away; of the travelling merchant, in quest of goodly pearls, for which he gives in exchange a whole caravan of costly goods; of the dignitaries in the castles of Philip and Antipas when He discourses of those who wear costly robes and dwell in kings' palaces; of the raven which sailed over the lake, its cliffs and shore, and was fed daily, though it had neither barn nor storehouse, and when He tells of the weather-wise and sky prophets, who cast their eyes over the hills by the lake, and said in the morning, "We shall have foul weather to-day, for the sky is red and lowering," but when they saw a glorious sunset behind its western shore, gossiped about "fair weather to-morrow," yet could not read the signs of the times while they could discern the face of the sky. When He spoke of the house built upon the rock, instead of the loose soil or sand, He alluded to Nazareth; where the streams from the cliffs sometimes poured down into the valley with such impetuosity, where the fierce winds blew the sea cloud over the top of Carmel, and the rain descended and the flood came, that the storms swept the loosely anchored structures away, and they fell.

CHURCH OF THE DIVINE PATERNITY.

THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF LIVING FOR ONE'S SELF ALONE—SERMON BY REV. DR. CHAPIN.

Dr. Chapin's theme was suggested by the words of Paul in his epistle to the Romans, xiv., 7—"For none of us liveth to himself and no man dieth to himself." No man, said the Doctor, belongs to himself; he is part of a system, governed by laws inscrutable, and performs a function subsequent or precedent to that of some other individual or individuals. Even as the bubbling streamlet lives and moves not for itself alone, but for the mighty ocean, on which the commercial navies of the world wing their way hither and thither, so man's existence is for the perpetuation of a grand economy conceived by God. Some men endeavor to live for themselves alone, but they fail. They look to it that every act of theirs conserves some personal interest; they hoard their gain, they live apart from men as much as they can, and long to get a monopoly of the sun and put it into shares. As near as can be they live to themselves, and yet they influence hundreds and thousands of people. Their example, their successes, their words, each have an influence that is none the less potent for the reason that we cannot weigh or grasp it. It is an intangible thing that eludes the touch; it cannot be examined, and, like electricity, we know it by its results. The most casual remark one may make may strike another mind while in a mood and remain for years an influence, and yet unknown to the author.

Nor can a man die, to follow out the text, to himself. True, we all enter alone into the gathering shadows which no friendly eye can pierce; we must alone depart from the threshold of time out on the vast eternity into which no kindly human hand can stretch, but with the associations and alliances we have made in life it cannot be said we die to ourselves. Nothing in God's universe is exclusive. Even the flowers—their essence blent in other forms still lives on, and in death is life. Strive how he may, man cannot live to himself. He may suppose himself the centre of involving life, even as Ptolemy placed the earth in the centre of his system and made the sun and the planets move around it; but it is a false hypothesis; he himself moves as an integral part of a system around the great centre. 'Tis not on account of war that we make heroes of warriors. War is disgusting in itself, but it is because warriors do some things beyond themselves and for others that all glory them. Theirs is an unselfish life, one of noble effort for others, and it is fitting that their memories be embalmed among men. Their example is a lesson to generations to come, they lived and died for others.

THIRD UNIVERSALIST CHURCH.

IS PROTESTANTISM A FAILURE?—SERMON BY THE REV. DR. SWEETSER.

"Is Protestantism a Failure?" was the subject of Rev. Dr. Sweetser's discourse at the Bleecker Street Universalist Church. His text was found in I. Thessalonians, v., 21—"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." The question as to the failure or success of Protestantism has been raised in new quarters, said the preacher, and will be more widely discussed in this country than ever before. It is to the Rev. Dr. Ewer, of the Protestant Episcopal Church, that we are indebted for the recent introduction of the subject. Ten years ago he openly took the ground that Protestantism is a failure, and within a few weeks he has repeated the charge. Although Dr. Sweetser did not believe that Dr. Ewer's reasoning was sound throughout, he thought there was sufficient appearance of truth in some of the most important statements to make them worthy the attention of all Protestant churches.

To determine whether Protestantism is a failure or not we must first determine by what standard to judge it. There are two things which we must be able to predicate of it. First, permanence; and, second, adaptability to the spiritual needs of the human racy. Any form of religion to be truly successful must have in itself the quality of stability, and it must give rest to its followers, rest to their souls, rest from sin, rest from discord, rest from fear. It must possess the glory of "that which remaineth" and bring forth righteousness, peace and joy. To judge Protestantism by these tests, what is meant by Protestantism must first be understood. The preacher then went on to define this, and in so doing made a retrospect of the religion to Luther's time. In these days the word "Protestant" signified merely a denier, an opponent of the Church of Rome. Taken in this sense to-day, and viewed from a religious standpoint, Protestantism is a failure. A religion which is founded upon the principle of negation, and whose ruling spirit is the spirit of dispute, is a foregone failure. If by Protestantism we mean that spirit of Christian liberty which seeks to prove all things and to hold fast to what is good, without regard to tradition or priestly injunctions, said the preacher, then Protestantism is a blessing of incalculable value. This sort of Protestantism has existed and proved itself too great a blessing to be surrendered or considered a failure. It is rapidly creating a new reformation on the basis of a Catholicism which is worthy of the name.

BROOKLYN TABERNACLE.

A PLEA FOR PEACE—SERMON BY REV. T. DE WITT TALMAGE.

In the Brooklyn Tabernacle Rev. Mr. Talmage preached to his usual large congregation from the text, "And they shall beat their swords into ploughshares" (Isaiah, ii., 4). The text, said Mr. Talmage, is a prophecy of the triumph of agriculture over war, the corn tassel over battle plumes, wheat racks over ammunition wagons, cottages over batteries. I know there does not seem to be any prospect of the immediate fulfilment of this prophecy, for this moment, while I speak, the nations of Europe seem to be planning how, in opposition to my text, they may beat the ploughshares into swords and sharpen the pruning knives into spears. It seems to me that all Christian people in all lands ought to be like John Bright, the great English reformer, denouncing war and advocating peace. (Applause.) At this time of the year, when we are accustomed to strew flowers on the graves of the soldier dead, and when we naturally revert to the sufferings of our awful civil war, it would be useful if I could stay you against this crime that is afflicting all nations. Christian men should be heard on this subject.

The annual decoration of the graves of the fallen soldiers of the North and the South has a tendency to work peace. The time is not far distant when on the same day the graves of the North and the graves of the South will be decorated. The time will be when all the scars of war will be covered up with flowers. You must give up your grudges. (Loud applause.) I have during these past few years travelled much at the North and the South, and I tell you that there is only one thing that can bring complete harmony between the North and the South, and that is the funeral of those politicians who want to be President. (Applause and laughter.) I wish all the flowers of the Northern and Southern graves might be lifted and twisted into a chain, each garland into a link and with this chain this whole land be bound together. That is the only kind of a chain Americans will ever consent to wear, and the sooner they put it on the better.

EIGHTEENTH STREET M. E. CHURCH.

JONAH AND THE WHALE—SERMON BY REV. MR. HATFIELD.

The Rev. William Hatfield delivered his last sermon before his departure for Europe in the Eighteenth Street Methodist Church in the evening. His subject was the story of Jonah and the whale, and an appropriate text was taken from Jonah i., 1, 2. He said:—The history of Jonah is brief, yet crowded with extraordinary events, the most extraordinary of which was his being swallowed by a whale. Jonah was a prophet, and, being a prophet, had a mission to fulfil, and that mission was to go to Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, and reprove the people for their idolatries. God had commissioned him to perform this work, but, instead of doing his duty, he leaves home and hastens to a seaport town called Joppa. There he takes passage on a ship, and in a day or two is far out on the Mediterranean. But suddenly a terrific storm arises, and all the sailors fail to praying to the gods in whom they believe. The captain hastens below and rouses the sleeping Jonah, beseeching him to pray to his God to avert the threatened calamity. But the sailors cast lots to see by whose sins the storm had been aroused, and the lot fell on Jonah, who thereupon confessed his guilt and begged to be thrown overboard. The sailors hesitated for some time and then granted his request. As soon as Jonah was cast into the sea, we are told, a calm settled down upon the troubled waters, and a great fish swallowed the erring prophet. While in the body of the fish Jonah prayed to his God, and his prayer being heard he was released from his confinement after three days and three nights and thrown upon the shore. Some of you will say, "That is the biggest fish story I ever heard." But does it seem any more incredible than the account of the flood, or the wonderful things which Christ did in Palestine? These were miracles, and so was the whale's swallowing Jonah and casting him forth on dry land. You ask me if I believe it to be true, and I answer yes. Nor is it a whit more improbable than the telegraph and the telephone and the phonograph would have seemed not many years ago. The latter invention, I fear, will hinder rather than hasten the progress of the Church by making it possible for people to attend, that is to hear, every word of the church service without leaving their houses or even their beds. One's home ought to be brought into communication with all the most distinguished pulpits in the land, and there would be no necessity of hiring pews or of contributing to benevolent objects. Now if man is capable of so using the forces of nature as to perform works that we would not believe if we had not seen them, do you not suppose that He who has created man and endowed him with such wonderful faculties is able to do what man cannot understand? That God who is the maker of all things and who rules over all worlds could as easily have caused a great fish to swallow Jonah as He could have created the great seas and brought both Jonah and the whale into existence?

"THE NEW CHURCH."

BRIGHTNESS OF THE LORD'S "SECOND COMING"—SERMON BY REV. W. B. HAYDEN.

The Rev. W. B. Hayden, who has just returned from England, where he has been preaching to the Swedenborgian Congregation at Southport, preached in the "New Church," on Thirty-fifth street, near Lexington avenue. His subject was entitled "The Great Gathering Together of the Nations Foretold in the Prophets." The text was from the second chapter and second verse of Isaiah—"And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it." These utterances, began the speaker, of the old prophets possess great interest in these days, because we are a part of them. They are rapidly passing to fulfilment. It is the brightness of the Lord's second coming that is now shining over the land. Until the opening of the present century only 3,000,000 Bibles had been circulated throughout the world. Since then, during a brief period of only seventy-eight years, 206,000,000 copies of the Scriptures have been distributed. In other words, more has been done in three-quarters of a century toward civilization than was done in the previous 3,000 years. For thirty centuries the Bible has only been translated into forty-seven languages, but within seventy-eight years it has been sent abroad in more than 250 languages. The Bible is the law of civilization, the forerunner of light and life and universal intelligence. The Apostle John saw the approaching splendor of these latter days in his visions. Mankind is called to leave the estate of the natural man to go up out of ignorance, out of intemperance, out of sin and pride, to the higher life of the new Jerusalem. The present awakening of nations to the call of Christianity is remarkable. Africa, Siam, China, India and the far off lands of the East are beginning to be moved by the advantages of Christian civilization. Their entire policy of business and diplomatic intercourse is changing. The Centennial Exhibition was attended by representatives of all the nations and kingdoms of the world. This meeting of nations for peace instead of for war is of incalculable benefit to civilization, but its business and social phases cannot destroy its prophetic and divine significance.

ST. PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL.

THE EFFICACY OF PRAYER—SERMON BY THE REV. FATHER HOGAN.

The high mass at the Cathedral was celebrated by the Rev. Father Kane and the sermon was preached by the Rev. Father Hogan, who took his text from the gospel of the Sunday—"If you ask the Father anything in my name he will give it to you." The important duty of every Christian, said the preacher, was to return thanks to God for all He had done for us, and to importune Him for the grace that we might continue to live in His friendship. Prayer, as St. Augustine says, is the key by which we may accomplish this. It was by prayer that Elias opened the heavens; it was by prayer that Joshua made the sun stand still. And so it was with Moses. By prayer Daniel was saved in the lion's den. The story of the three Hebrew children was familiar. The instructions in the Gospel were unceasing telling us of the efficacy of prayer to God. Our Lord Himself taught us how to pray when He gave us the petition which we call "Our Father." It is most reasonable that we should pray, even without the light of the examples the Scriptures abound in. We all had spiritual and temporal necessities to contend against, and who else could relieve us but our Lord and Master? For this reason the Redeemer commanded us to pray always. Prayer is a beautiful signification on our part of our belief. One of its first fruits is an acknowledgment of the Father, who is our refuge in danger, our helper in every trial and difficulty. The psalmist says that we are to call upon the Lord in the day of our trial and difficulty. By so doing we should glorify Him. The nearer we can come to Him the more we shall love Him, and while we ourselves were nothing, the more we reflect upon who God is the more satisfied we shall become that we ought to pray, humbly and truly.

CHINESE CHARACTERISTICS.

FIFTH DISCOURSE IN REV. DR. NEWMAN'S SERIES—"CONFUCIUS AND CONFUCIANISM."

At the Central Methodist Episcopal Church, Fourteenth street and Seventh avenue, last evening, Dr. Newman delivered the fifth in his series of discourses on "The Seven Great Religions of the World." As on the previous occasions the edifice was crowded. Dr. Newman took for his text 1 Corinthians, i., 20—"The world by wisdom knew not God." He said:—In speaking to you to-night on Confucius and Confucianism let us inquire who is Confucius? What did he teach? What are the effects of his teachings on the individual and national life of his countrymen? What Moses is to the Jews, Socrates is to the Greeks, Mohammed is to the Moslems, Confucius is to the Chinese. Of the greatness of his intellect, the wisdom of his teachings and the power of his name there can be no dispute. If the mental sceptre of Mohammed is still swayed over 160,000,000 of our race, if Buddha is the acknowledged teacher of 290,000,000 of our fellow men, Confucius is greater than they, and is now received as the philosopher and teacher of half the population of our globe. We cannot ignore such a man. Let us honor him for whatever is excellent in his life and sayings and condemn whatever is erroneous and injurious.

He was the son of a Chinese general, who, at the age of seventy, became the master of a second concubine, the mother of his illustrious son. He was born in the year 549 B. C., in the little town of Loo, in the province of Shantung. His parents were poor, and the son was reared in wants. His father died when the child was three years old and he was left to the care of his mother, who directed his studies and taught him morals. He evinced an aptitude for learning at an early age. At the age of twenty he was a government official. When twenty-three he taught philosophy and morals in his own house, and thither the young men resorted as his pupils. His person was large, his mind was strong, his manner was grave. He believed that Heaven had commissioned him to be the teacher of his countrymen. But he was in no sense a religious teacher. He was a moralist, reformer and statesman. He had a superstitious reverence for antiquity, and quoted the ancients to rebuke the immoralities of his own age. He lived to the advanced age of seventy-three, and died in 476 B. C., eight years before the birth of Socrates.

CONFUCIUS, THE "PERFECT MAN."

And now, after the lapse of 2,300 years, it is difficult to displace him from the mind of the Chinese. He is to them a God. His contemporaries accorded to him the virtues of a "perfect man," and his present disciples pay him divine honors. In every native schoolhouse in China are tablets to his memory, and twice each each month the child is required to bow before the same as an act of worship. Not less than 1,600 temples are dedicated to his honor, upon the altars of which offerings are annually made. His grandest temple is in Pekin, on the walls of which are the following inscriptions:—"To the Soul of the Most Holy Ancestor, Teacher, Confucius;" "Equal with Heaven and Earth;" "Of all Men Born the Unrivalled." In that temple the Emperor worships Confucius once a year. Here the Doctor gave an interesting description of the form of worship as practised by the Emperor, and also an account of the melancholy death of Confucius, whose last words were these:—

The great mountain must crumble,
The strong beam must break,
And the wise man wither away like a plant.

The Doctor, continuing, said:—What are the teachings of this remarkable man? He held that virtue and happiness are to be found in the strict observance of the five relations and in the faithful practice of the five virtues. The five relations refer to the Emperor and his subjects, the husband and wife, the father and son, the elder and younger brothers and elder and younger friends. He demanded subordination on the part of the inferior to the superior. He held that the father could compel the son to obey, and had the right to use physical force, even to the shedding of blood.

AUTHORSHIP OF THE GOLDEN RULE.

The five virtues which he taught are faith, knowledge, propriety, righteousness and benevolence; by which he meant sincerity, acquaintance with one's self, respect due a superior, "that which ought to be done" and reciprocity. The Doctor here discussed the question whether Confucius was the author of the golden rule, as claimed by some of his admirers. All that can be said, he continued, is that Confucius gave the negative form of that rule, which is at best the essence of selfishness one of his disciples, wiser and better than his master, inquired, "Should injury be recompensed with kindness?" but Confucius replied, "With what, then, will you recompense kindness? Recompense injury with justice and recompense kindness with kindness." He taught the doctrine of revenge, and to this day revenge is sweet in China. But the golden rule, as Christ taught it, is "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you do ye even so to them." This is a positive command, the essence of which is found in Leviticus, xix., 18, which was announced by the Jehovah Christ of the Old Testament a thousand years before Confucius was born. What are the effects of teachings of Confucius upon the life of his countrymen? He has nothing to say on the being, character and government of God. He substituted the impersonal term "heaven" for the personal term "Shangti," or "Supreme Ruler." When a disciple inquired concerning God, Confucius replied, "Speak little concerning the gods; treat them with respect, but keep out of their way." This is the secret of the atheism of the literati of China.

EFFECTS OF CONFUCIANISM.

He taught nothing as to a future state. When asked as to the immortality of the soul, he said, "Imperfectly acquainted with life, how can I know death?" When asked, "Have the dead knowledge?" he would not reply. He taught nothing as to the international philanthropy which should embrace all men, which accounts for the arrogance of the present Chinese. As a statesman he taught despotism. He taught the subordination and degradation of woman. The Chinese hold that woman has no soul, and hence the burden of the prayer of a Chinese woman is that she may be a man in good circumstances in the next world. Confucius taught and practised deceitfulness, hence the Chinese are a nation of liars. And he favored, by precept and example, the idolatrous worship of ancestors, which now prevails throughout the Empire in which is annually spent $158,000,000. Dr. Newman compared and contrasted Christ and Confucius, showing that Christ taught all that Confucius taught that was excellent, but in a purer, higher and completer form. And to this our Lord added a knowledge of the fatherhood of God, of the brotherhood of man, of a future state, of equality and justice in civil government and the honor due to woman.

In conclusion he said that Confucius felt the imperfection of his own teachings, for he prophesied before dying, "A sage shall come from the west." In the year 60 of our era the Chinese Emperor sent an embassy to Palestine to invite Christ to China. But when the ambassadors reached India the Buddhistic priests persuaded them that Buddha was the "sage," and they returned home with the teachings of Buddha rather than with the doctrines of Christ.

UNION EVANGELICAL TENT.

Notwithstanding the bright and beautiful weather the Union Evangelistic Tent at Seventh avenue and Fifty-third street, contained but a small audience yesterday afternoon. At half-past three o'clock the service of music was commenced and a number of sacred songs sung by the choir, among them being "There is a fountain filled with blood," "Ninety and nine" and others. Owing in a great measure no doubt to the fact that the songs that were sung were not contained in the books given to the audience, the singing was principally confined to the few who had the correct books. At a quarter of four o'clock the Rev. Mr. Makey read from the Bible and afterward the Rev. Mr. Williams prayed. The Rev. H. A. King, who conducted the services throughout, then arose and preached from I. Corinthians, xii., xiii. The reverend gentleman first likened Christ as head of the Church to the head of a human body and the members of the Christian Church to the other parts of the body. Wickedness on the part of a member of the Church was felt by all of the others, just as all the parts of a human body would be in sympathy with one of the other parts that might happen to be crushed. After dwelling for some time on this comparison the preacher turned to another portion of his text and explained how necessary it was that Christians should have charity—not merely in the conventional sense of giving alms, but genuine charity, as St. Paul thought and spoke of. The preaching lasted for some time, after which a collection was taken up.

CHURCH OF THE MESSIAH.

A GOOD SOLDIER—SERMON BY REV. W. R. ALGER.

Rev. William R. Alger, at the Church of the Messiah, Thirty-fourth street and Park avenue, preached for Memorial Day on "A Good Soldier; or, the Martial Virtues." The text was from the second epistle of Timothy, ii., 3—"A good soldier." As appropriate to the occasion of the approaching memorial anniversary the preacher said he had collected some thoughts on the characteristic traits of the ideal soldier. As we sow so shall we reap is as true of the nation as of the individual. Although the separate cells which compose the human frame are undergoing constant change the individual remains the same, and as long as he lives must be responsible for the deeds done in the body. The war of the rebellion was the outgrowth of the accumulated wrongs of human slavery, and in the overthrow of this colossal evil of the nineteenth century the world witnessed the spectacle of four millions of slaves wearing liberty caps, the symbol of their freedom. It was not a war of vengeance or ambition, it was a war for self-preservation, and one which nourished every patriotic virtue. When duty called the brave soldier rose and knew no fear. Now, all through the land let the bands play, banners wave, cannons boom, and let fair hands strew the graves of the fallen heroes. Pay your tributes to those who gave up their lives for their country, and hold dot back your generous laurels from the living who returned. One of the first grounds of admiration for the character of the true soldier is that which he has obtained through the high uses of the military drill. Through that systematic discipline he has gained that ease and strength which give courage and self-possession. By becoming a soldier he has acquired loftier aims and will henceforth live on a higher plane. What a wonderful transformation was that which witnessed the change of the crowds of barroom loafers into an army of well disciplined regiments. The ideal soldier is incapable of fear, fraud or meanness.

As an illustration of the spirit of obedience which should animate the soldier Mr. Alger spoke of the Theban general who had his son with him during the war with the Spartans. The young man was left in command for a short period during the absence of his father, with the strict injunction not to be drawn into an engagement. Taunted by the enemy he led his command into battle and won a splendid victory. His father, on his return, crowned him with laurels for his bravery and cut his head off for disobedience. With a contrast between the hero and the coward, the minister said, "As long as the world stands the man who is not afraid will be admired."

PERILS OF OUR COUNTRY.

WHAT THEY ARE AND HOW THEY SHOULD BE MET—SERMON BY REV. MR. STEELE.

South Third Street Methodist Episcopal Church, Brooklyn, E. D., was well filled last evening with a congregation in which members of the Grand Army of the Republic, the Order of United American Mechanics and Order of the American Union were included. They were attracted by a memorial sermon preached by Rev. W. C. Steele anticipatory of Decoration Day. His theme was—"The Perils of Our Country." Those perils he classed under three heads—Romanism, Demagogueism and Communism. In elaborating his theme Mr. Steele sketched the principles that underlie American institutions, such as the supremacy of constitutional law; the equality of all men