FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT.

Sermons and Services in Many of the Churches.

TOPICS DISCUSSED.

Cardinal McCloskey, Bishop Potter and Other Prominent Clergymen Preach.

A SOMBRE SABBATH.

To the unorthodox and unfashionable people of the community yesterday was simply the second day of March, but to the orthodox and the fashionable (and the two are now very closely related in the metropolis) yesterday was the first Sunday in Lent. The day dawned with a settled cloudiness and a chill, uninviting atmosphere. It seemed as if Nature had united with the clergy in announcing that the season of denial had come. There was a notable increase in the attendance at Catholic and Episcopal churches. It is a settled custom, among those who observe the Lenten season at all, to attend the first Sunday's services at any sacrifice. After that exceptions may be taken. Lent does not require to be gradually initiated. Festivity is allowed such ample swing just before Lent's arrival that Fashion is ready to plunge at once into the other extreme, and gladly lay aside the mask of gayety for the more impenetrable one of gravity. The abstemious is something that people are disposed to dread until a surfeit of pleasure renders it positively welcome. With a more than usually merry winter behind them and Easter smiling in the near future, fashionable New Yorkers "dropped into Lent" with genuine comfort. Had yesterday been as pleasant as many of the preceding Sabbaths there would have been stronger evidences of the Lenten period; but it was not. It was one of those days when the meanest of people feel like going to church, and when even the most restless do not feel like going in search of amusement. Consequently the avenues and the Park were almost bare of humanity. There was nothing of interest to be seen in them, and if one strayed along the city streets to catch a glimpse of his fellow beings on their way to church his spirits were not at all improved. Everybody appeared to be wrapped up in individual thought, and those who did not look tired looked rather benign than sociable. Perhaps most of them concurred with Mark Tapley that there was no credit in being jolly under such circumstances, and if they couldn't enjoy the credit they positively and properly declined to be jolly.

CHURCH OF THE DISCIPLES.

PRAYER AND ITS EFFICACY—SERMON BY THE REV. GEORGE H. HEPWORTH.

"Master, Master, we perish," was the text selected by Mr. Hepworth yesterday morning as the basis of a sermon on prayer. The incident that is indicated in the words of our text, he said, came at the close of a very busy day. Jesus had not only been preaching to the multitude, but He had been called to heal the sick, to give sight to the blind and hearing to those who were deaf. Pressed upon by the multitude He asked the people to carry Him to the other side of the lake. When they had pushed out from the shore a little way, wearied by His exertions Jesus laid along the stern of the vessel and was soon fast asleep. The disciples probably gathered near Him, wondering at that marvellous power which even the laws of nature seemed to have neither the desire nor the ability to disobey. While Jesus lay in the tranquillity of slumber all at once danger approaches from the side of the hilltop, and whence comes an unexpected gust that sweeps across the lake and strikes the little boat. At once they think of Him. He is not aroused by the impending calamity; secure as a child in his mother's arms He sleeps on. They, on the other hand, are filled not simply with excitement, but with graver fear, as the waves continue to rise so high that they threaten to engulf them. They rush to the after part of the vessel to awaken the Master—He who has given sight to the man who was born blind—believing that He might in some way assist them in their dire extremity. With a thorough consciousness of the danger of their position they arouse Him; with no gentle voice do they speak to Him, but with a voice of importunity because their needs are great. "Master! Master!" was their cry. They knew that the moment He saw their trouble that if He had the ability He would allay it. They had sufficient confidence in Him to believe that if they could make known to Him their wants He would meet them. They had had no experience of their Master's ability in such a crisis as this. There must have appeared to them to be a very great difference between the Master saying to the dead man, "Lazarus, I say unto you come forth," and standing on the deck of a frail vessel in the midst of a wild tornado. He lifted His hands toward the heavens and said, "Peace, be still," and the great waves went down. Little wonder is it that when the disciples saw this great miracle they looked into each other's faces and said, "What manner of man is this that even the winds and the seas obey him."

WHAT THE INCIDENT PROVES.

The incident proves that man instinctively prays at some time or other. Prayer is the natural and inevitable result of our spiritual and intellectual conformation. Gratitude and sense of dependence, our hopes for the future, our fears for the past, all find their natural expression in the language of prayer. It is utterly impossible for my mind to conceive of a man having a man's nature who never utters a prayer. Prayer and praise are the music of a man's life; they cover us with the canopy of God. The man who lives alone lives a wretched life. We are interdependent one upon the other. It is the law of our nature, it is the law of our social station, it is the law that underlies all business. There is no relationship that binds us to the world in which we are not dependent one upon the other. There comes a time in every man's life when he will not be able to answer the prayers of his friend. It has come in my experience and it has come in yours. There comes a time when loving hands are reached out in vain supplication, when our tears fall and we ask in vain our neighbor to do that which is too great for him to do. When the great calamity came on the disciples on the Sea of Galilee the disciples turned to each other in fear and wonder, and then asked Jesus; they lifted their eyes to Him in fear and wonder, and He lifted His hands up to the Great Unseen, and, bidding the tempest be still, even the winds and the seas obeyed Him.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF PRAYER.

Some man tells me that he cannot understand the philosophy of prayer. I do not doubt it, for it is not the only grave and important question that we cannot understand; it would then be surprising if it were not surrounded with serious and grave doubts. But we are living in a world in which we know very little. There are a large number of other problems that are mysteries to us. We judge of many laws simply by the result of their actions. No man knows what the law of gravitation is. We simply know that it is a law and we act upon it. I judge of prayer mainly by its power in results, and yet I would not have you think it is bounded by our senses. It I have a longing for prayer then it is an argument that there is a listener. It is legitimate for me to say that the desire, the instinct, the impulse of prayer was placed within me by God for a legitimate use, and that my aspirations are natural and designed for the enlargement of my spiritual being. When I look upon the sacred records which have been handed down to us I see all over the Old Testament descriptions of what prayer is and what it has done. Notably is this the case in the recital of the wanderings of Moses and the three millions of wanderers. If I turn to the life of Christ I find the same thing. The history of the New Testament is the history of prayer. From the days of the public ministry of Christ to the hour He saw the shadow of the darkness of Gethsemane prayer was His sustaining power.

FIFTH AV. PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

THE OUTPOURING OF THE SPIRIT—SERMON BY THE REV. DR. JOHN HALL.

The Rev. Dr. John Hall preached in the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church on the subject:—"The Prophecy of Joel, or the Outpouring of the Spirit." After the usual hymns, prayer and lesson the pastor read the last part of the second chapter of the Book of Joel, beginning at the twenty-eighth verse, with the words:—"And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh." There are many, said Dr. Hall, who confess that they do not receive all the spiritual gain that it is desirable that they should receive. Even so, there are not a few who have heard this Gospel all their lives and there is no evidence that they have received it in their hearts. What is there to make the word of God effectual and drive away ignorance and prejudice? Not the power of any minister or church, of reason or pathos, no power can do it but the power of the Divine Spirit. I hope it is not as a matter of decent form that we ask that the Holy Ghost may be with us. There can be no permanent spiritual good in any soul, in any church, but in the degree in which the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity is with us, demonstrating the truth that He is endowed with irresistible power. I am to speak this morning of this outpouring of the Spirit referred to by the prophet.

THE PROPHET JOEL.

There is not much to be said regarding what is personal of the prophet Joel. The time in which he delivered his message is fixed approximately about eight centuries before the coming of Jesus Christ. His prophecy is comparatively brief, but full of method, so that we are enabled to classify his subjects and divide them into three great themes. In the first two chapters and part of the second we have a most vivid and graphic account of the wasting and desolation of the land by the plague of locusts. After the land is thus desolated the Lord promises abundant rains. Then, as the natural rains came timely and abundantly to the natural Israel, making the land prosperous, so in the passage read God announces that He will pour out His Spirit, rain of another kind, producing results of a very valuable and permanent character. The Book closes with a description of the peace and purity and righteousness that shall follow God's true Israel, his redeemed family, after that judgment day.

In the passage read we have—first, the outpouring of the Holy Ghost introducing this dispensation; and, secondly, the great and terrible day of the Lord closing up this dispensation. The word "afterward" refers to the days of the Messianic dispensation, these last days, and the Apostle Peter quotes the words in that sense. He does not mean to say that the prophecy was exhausted but that it began at that time. "I will pour out my Spirit," not an influence, a mere form of energy, but a distinct personal force, whom we can describe by the use of pronouns and to whom we can attribute personal qualities. This is what God says He will give. "I will pour out," indicating the abundance with which this gift will be bestowed. Not that the Holy Ghost was not given to Israel, but this gift was then limited in amount and in extent. Not so in the Christian dispensation. Then both Jews and Gentiles, "all flesh," received the gifts of the Holy Ghost. The moment it was known that Peter was receiving Gentiles into the church he was rebuked by those who were then believers and in time the first council was called to settle the question.

We next consider the second portion—How is this dispensation to end? The mind of the prophet passes on to the next great event of Messianic times—the second coming and the judgment. The expressions "the sun turned into darkness and the moon into blood," are to indicate the grandeur and solemnity of the great and terrible day of the Lord.

Now, what is between? In the last verse is the answer—"Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be delivered." One is not safe as a matter of course. There is a real danger, a necessity for escape. He shall escape who shall call upon the name of the Lord. It is no mere guess or hypothesis or conjecture; it is Jehovah's express declaration.

THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Now, my dear brethren, let me make a closing appeal to you. Culture is good, genius is brilliant, civilization is a blessing, education is a great privilege, but we may be educated villains. The thing that we want most of all is the precious gift of the Holy Ghost. If you have it not it is not because there is a deficiency of supply, but because you have not asked. There is at this moment a very deep feeling in this city on behalf of the people who are living in the ill ventilated plague spots of our city, and it is well that that feeling should be directed to some good. But my dear brethren, remember that you may transfer them to the luxuriant club houses of the upper part of the city, and, if you do nothing more for them than that, they will be trangressors still—longer lived transgressors, indeed, but transgressors still. Give them light—yes; but let them have light that comes from the Father. Let them have pure air—yes; but let them come and breathe the atmosphere that the Holy Ghost diffuses. And when this is done, and in the measure that this is done, we shall have a guarantee for purity, piety and goodness.

"Whosoever calleth upon the name of the Lord." My dear brethren, have you called upon Him? You do not need to be heathens and infidels, nor to speak against religion; only let it alone, and how shall you escape? In many a form I have urged it upon you, and it will not be possible for you to say that you do not know about this salvation or the terms upon which it could be had. Oh, men and brethren of Christ, this is your day. Your free will can do what it will. You can live as you wish. This is your day, but God has His. There is a great and terrible day of the Lord when the grievances of His kingdom will be redressed, when His own honor will be vindicated and His government cleared of all imputation and His enemies shall be driven from His presence. Oh, I beseech you in this day of grace, if you have not received His Spirit, call upon the name of the Lord that you may be saved.

MASONIC TEMPLE.

THE PULPIT—ITS PLACE IN THE MODERN WORLD—SERMON BY MR. O. B. FROTHINGHAM.

The impression has gone abroad, said Mr. Frothingham, in his sermon at Masonic Temple on the subject of "The Pulpit and Its Place in the Modern World," that preaching and preachers are out of date; that in future the influence of the spoken word will daily become less and less. In speaking to the subject the preacher went on to say that the people are told of the small number of churches and how few church goers there are in this great city; that the creaking of pulleys and the whistling of ropes are the only sounds heard, and that the masses are too busy with their own interests to think of attending to preachers or preaching. The time was when preachers were the eminent men of the community; then they possessed almost an exclusive university training; then there were no newspapers or magazines, and preachers were the oracular men of their own times. That time has passed away for the preachers as well as the Church. Now books and newspapers are plentiful; people read as they run, and there is no need of going to church for information on any subject. Literary men, as a class, do not go to church; they have their books and writings; scientific and philosophical men do not attend church, for they are pursuing at home their investigations and following their own lines of thought. There is another thing, too, that keeps people away from church; it is that the living age loves amusement and does not care to be always grappling with great thoughts, and the minister must be grave. It is his office to draw tears from the people's hearts through speaking of the eternal law, and the mirthfulness that is wholesome everywhere else sinks into nothingness when brought into the presence of the doctrine of eternal life. Hence, this light-hearted, novel-reading age does not overthrong the churches.

The spirit of scepticism is abroad, the preacher has set Christian themes to deal with under his own interpretation, and the congregation are impatient to listen to an open secret about which there is a lurking scepticism in the minds of even the most orthodox of the leading Christians. The most liberal Christian preacher must assume, under a divine Christ, the utter helplessness of humanity, and also the divine inspiration of the Bible. The clergyman does not put himself on the plane of a layman; all his arguments are presented with a spirit of dogmatism; it is in his profession to do so. Now, this is disagreeable in the days of newspapers, magazines and conventions, when men demand things to be discussed on their own merits. The community is getting tired of clerical dictation, and this is another reason why pulpits are getting into disfavor. Why, then, it might be asked, if all these things be true, do crowds still gather to hear men preach? The truth is that churches are, after all, not so much deserted as some people claim them to be. There are more living minds in the churches to-day than there have ever been heretofore. The reason for this is that there hangs a singular fanaticism about cardinal doctrines; we are always interested about them, for there are hours that come instinctively when we wish to hear the Word spoken of. There is that mysterious, strange thing called death—never to be escaped—which is a fact in all our histories, and no philosophy has ever enabled a man to overcome it. Every great age, the speaker believed, is heralded in by the preacher. It was so with the Hebrew, the Christian, the Protestant ages, and it will be so with the coming ages—liberality and love among mankind.

PLYMOUTH CHURCH.

THE DUALITY OF MAN'S NATURE—SERMON BY MR. BEECHER.

Mr. Beecher made the final announcement yesterday morning of the Plymouth Bethel Fair, which is to be held during three days of the present week.

The text of the sermon was II. Corinthians, iv., 6—"Though our outward man perish yet the inward man is renewed day by day." The duality of man, said he, runs in thought through all of Paul's writings. There was a man inspired within a man; an invisible creature hidden within the objective one. Whether was taken the purely spiritualistic view of the soul, as being something separable and separate from the body, or the materialistic one, that it is matter carried up to the highest degree of refinement, it practically amounted to the same thing.

As a very general statement it was true that a man's outward life was the reflex of his inward, and that men have in some degree the reputation of being what they really are. But this state of things did not run through a man's whole nature; it was only true of his more violent passions and those which have to do especially with human life. The man who smites prejudices full in the face had always a bad reputation among those whom he hurts and hinders. On the other hand, some men were better in their conduct than in their inward life. Their ruling desires might be unpopular, and the rules of society, working through their vanity, might prevent them from openly seeking their gratification. Many men did coarse, cruel and selfish things under the mask of politeness, friendship or generosity.

SEVERE ON THE LADIES.

How much misery was caused by the devil appearing on earth in the shape of woman. There were many devils walking the streets in linsey-woolsey, but there were a great many also dressed in broadcloth, in velvet and in satins who were worse devils than they. There were those whose whole lives were wrapt up in sordidness, who hurt whomsoever they touched, whose hands were iron and whose fingers had claws. Their hearts were like dens of dragons, yet their outward lives were really legal. There was nothing crueller in this world, and no more frequent species of cruelty, than so to enforce one's rights upon one's neighbor that he was crucified on account of them. Men who were truly great were much better inside than outside. Mr. Beecher amplified upon the proverbial worldly incapacity of the wise. If a man did not know what to do, if he had no *savoir faire*, he would be very much disesteemed in a Yankee country. If he went South, where they were used to that sort of thing, it was all right—(laughter)—but New England was the hardest place in the world for a shiftless loafer, even though he be well meaning. The lives of many such men, however, although they appeared as wastes, were populous, rich and beautiful within.

Imagination often depicted men falsely. Mr. Beecher had thrown javelin sentences against many men and afterward had found out that they were not what he thought them to be; they were the wrong men. (Laughter.) Sometimes he had an idea that something of the kind had been done to him. (More laughter.)

WILLETT STREET M. E. CHURCH.

IS CHRISTIANITY A FAILURE?—SERMON BY REV. J. E. SEARLES.

We may consider Christianity in a national, social and personal view, said the Rev. J. E. Searles at the Willett Street Methodist Episcopal Church, in discussing the much mooted question, "Is Christianity a failure?" His text was taken from Revelation, vii., 9. As to the several and varied forms and organizations under which Christianity appeared and is now visible, he said, they are of human invention and not essential to the question. True Christianity must be found in the hearts, lives and acts of the disciples of Christ. After enlarging at some length on Christianity as a living faith the preacher declared that there is this paradox in Christ's teachings:—He came not to bring peace, but a sword, and yet he came to bring peace and good will to men. Christianity is set for the destruction of evil and the bringing in of peace, of purity and of love. Its work, therefore, is twofold—to overthrow and build up.

WHAT CHRISTIANITY HAS DONE.

Now, what has it done? the preacher asked, and he proceeded to answer. It dug a nation's grave that stood in its way; it withstood the most terrible opposition and persecutions, and in three centuries it transformed the laws and institutions of the mightiest empire that ever existed. But it may be replied, Mr. Searles said, that Christianity did not retain her victory. But this, the preacher urged, cannot be regarded as failure any more than changes and defeat in secular government are to be regarded as failure. After citing several instances of the failure of governments he argued that Christianity has seen vicissitudes for the same reason, and proceeded to compare the Christian government of the earth with all government not Christian, and deduced the lesson that Christianity promotes the policy of self-government. Wherever it breathes its vitalizing breath it promotes the best forms of civilization; it furnishes the most perfect code of morals; it regulates the civic law of nations. Its force has been very much neutralized by its perversion from its real mission, by the encumbrances of human traditions and by the undue magnifying of ceremonials and creeds, but as a power resident in the nations it rules the world.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF ITS ACHIEVEMENTS.

In a national view, therefore, Christianity cannot be regarded as a failure, and as a social element it has accomplished more than any other agency to elevate and promote human welfare. To illustrate this the preacher showed what it had accomplished in Britain since the time of the Druids, and the present condition of the British people was compared with that of the South Sea Islanders. The effects in Japan and India were also noted, and the preacher claimed that the ancient religions of those countries were rapidly giving way before it. Its achievements for the social elevation of woman and for the liberty of the oppressed in all Christian nations were also pointed out, and a strong feature was made of the gigantic superstructure of Christian charities in hospitals, almshouses and prisons, and in caring for the homeless and friendless and for the poor little foundling. There is a home in it, the preacher said with fervor, and he then asked, What has done all this? Is it the teachings of men who discard the Bible and ridicule Christianity? Does this come from men who denounce churches and Christians? No, it comes from the Bible and from Christianity.

TRUE GOODNESS.

The arguments brought against Christianity from the faults and shortcomings of professing Christians prove too much. If all the teachings and influences of Christianity fail to make some people truly good, what would they be without them? The comparisons instituted by the opponents of Christianity are unfair. They take the poorest specimens of Christians and compare them with the best people who do not profess religion. The worst should always be compared with the worst. Socially Christians are the people. The wealth of nations is in their circle. The greatest proportion of talent and culture is in the churches, in the pulpit or in the pews. The great educational institutions mostly belong to the department of Christianity. The learned professions are mainly composed of Christians. Christianity embraces the family relation, it alone gives sanctity to marriage and is its chief safeguard.

THE FINAL TRIUMPH OF CHRISTIANITY.

Christianity, the preacher said, has been prejudiced by the austerity of some of its professors. True Christianity appeals to common sense. It is adapted to this life and is not intended to circumscribe any innocent and rational enjoyment. After illustrating this part of his theme Mr. Searles said, in conclusion, that the greater part of the success of Christianity is personal and hidden—that is to say, it is an expression of the heart—spiritual. There are thousands of the most devoted Christians whose humble position in society excludes them from public observation, and there are multitudes who perhaps outwardly may not appear to any great moral advantage who nevertheless are heroically battling against some terrible difficulty unknown to men, and in God's sight are worthy of all praise for doing as well as they do. We must not overlook the fact that religion is complete in its personal spiritual benefits in each individual Christian. Spiritually, therefore, to judge intelligently and justly of the success or failure of Christianity we must know the extent of its influence upon individuals. The fact will not be changed whether we refer to the results in this world or to the final triumphs of the Gospel in the world to come, and the crowning glory is seen in the complete deliverance from sin and salvation in heaven.

ST. PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL.

THE FORTY HOURS' ADORATION—SERMON BY HIS EMINENCE CARDINAL M'CLOSKEY.

A large congregation was attracted to the Cathedral by the announcement that the forty hours' adoration would be solemnized. There was scarcely standing room in the aisles, so numerous was the attendance. The ceremonies were conducted very impressively, and the music, as is usual on all special occasions at this church, was of the highest order. The altars were ablaze with lights. His Eminence Cardinal McCloskey officiated and occupied the throne at the gospel side of the altar. At his right sat Bishop Lynch, of Charleston, S. C., and around them Vicar General Quinn and the assistant priests. A solemn high mass was celebrated, of which the Rev. Father Kane was celebrant, assisted by a deacon and a subdeacon.

THE CARDINAL'S SERMON.

After the first gospel the Cardinal left the throne and knelt at the altar, while the choir sang a "Veni Creator Spiritus." He then ascended the pulpit and preached from the gospel of the Sunday, in which is narrated the fast of the Saviour for forty days and nights, and His being tempted by the devil. From the earliest ages of the world, the preacher said, fasting was a religious observance among all religious, even in the pagan world, and it was but fitting that the body, which was the instrument of sinning, should be made to pay the penalty in restraint and suffering. It was principally through the vicious indulgences of the body that man sinned, and the Catholic Church had always inculcated the great duty of mortification. The Church in the olden time was much more severe in its injunctions than in the present day, and the fasts usually now prescribed were lenient indeed in comparison with the stern restrictions imposed upon our ancestors in the faith. The Church imposed no more than our poor, frail nature would bear. The observance of this Lenten season was not merely an institution of man. The example as given in the gospel of the day was set by the founder of the Church Himself. The fast, however, was enjoined not merely for punishment, but as conducive to greater spiritual devotion. Experience had taught that it was only when the body and its passions were subdued that the mind was free to fix itself on heavenly things. The lives of the saints were full of illustrations of these in the advantages of fasting and their implied belief in the practice as a spiritual duty. But there was another duty which always accompanied that of fasting, which was always mentioned in connection with it, and of which the Church was never weary of ringing the changes, and that was almsgiving. In this season of depression this duty had a double sanction. "The poor ye have always with you," but owing to peculiar causes they were now more numerous than they had been for many previous years. Without charity there could be no true Christianity, and no active self-mortification excused the discharge of this duty. As we accompanied the Saviour during this penitential season through the different stages of His passion we should bear in mind this double duty of fasting and almsgiving, and then we might hope, with God's divine aid and blessing, to participate in the glories of His resurrection.

THE FORTY HOURS' ADORATION.

At the conclusion of the mass His Eminence and Bishop Lynch approached the high altar, where kneeling, His Eminence was invested with a gorgeous cope, and the prayers for the opening of the forty hours' adoration were begun. Then a procession was formed, and the blessed sacrament having been placed in the Cardinal's hands, the circuit of the church was made, the choir singing a hymn. About fifty little girls dressed in white and wearing sashes and carrying bouquets in their hands, preceded by a cross bearer carrying a cross of red roses, and each society having its own silken banner, headed the procession. Next came the altar boys, carrying lighted tapers, and then the priests. Incense bearers and acolytes walked immediately before the canopy, beneath which was the Cardinal, having a priest at either side of him. Bishop Lynch walked first before the canopy and next were the Vicar General and the celebrant, deacon and subdeacon of the mass. When the procession returned to the high altar the blessed sacrament was placed over the tabernacle, the monstrance in which it was inclosed being thus exposed to the view of the congregation. The Litany of the Saints and other prayers were then chanted and the service was concluded. The Blessed Sacrament will remain exposed for forty hours, when it will be removed during other imposing ceremonies.

FIFTH AVENUE BAPTIST CHURCH.

SATAN'S PERSONALITY—SERMON BY THE REV. DR. ARMITAGE.

The Rev. Dr. Armitage preached on Satan's personality. As a simple matter of fact, in all time, the world over, men have believed in the devil. That is, they have believed in a mischievous, terror striking being, known by some given name, who has obtained and exercised a mysterious and corrupt influence on their minds. Many millions of Christians are examining the greatest encounter on record between the arch fiend and the Son of God, and all are connecting it with some of the most essential truths in Christianity. They do not hold the doctrine of Satanic existence as a keystone in the Christian arch, but they cannot see how it may be removed without indirectly affecting their whole sphere of Christian faith and duty. They hold that one of the chief ends of Christ's mission into the world was "to destroy the works of the devil." But if there are no such works to be destroyed, because there is no devil to do them, then the purpose of that mission is undermined and the symmetry of the Christian system is broken. Of course it will follow that their devotional fears, the humiliation which they practise, and the prayers which they offer for deliverance from the tempter, become, in that case, popular delusions and ludicrous errors. For, instead of wrestling manfully with the real foe they are but the votaries of a vulgar superstition, dealing blows at an imaginary enemy and energetically beating the air.

THE BIBLE THE STANDARD.

The reverend Doctor reviewed the various notions concerning the devil which have prevailed at different times, all of which, he said, were corruptions of the biblical ideal. The use of the term "devil," merely as a poetic or ethical personification of evil, is not, he claimed, found in the New Testament. Nothing can be clearer than the account of Christ's actual encounter with Satan in person. Jesus met him in the desert, the temple and the mountain and passed through a threefold struggle with him. The facts of this narrative are recorded in exactly the same style which records all the other narratives of Christ's life. If this record is a parable, a myth or a vision, we have no evidence that His birth, death and resurrection are not the same. The theory of the temptation which assumes that it is not an actual fact cannot be proved. If there is no outside tempter the sinless heart of Christ could not engender the blasphemies of that temptation, and, in fact, nothing short of the ravings of lunacy could have seized his celestial mind and landed it on the brink of such bold blasphemies. Whether Satan was present in the form of a man or some other figure we have no information, any more than we have of the form in which the great angel Gabriel appeared to Mary or Daniel. The Apostle Paul attributes to him the power to take upon him the form of an angel of light, and, as Shakespeare expresses it, the devil has power to assume a pleasing shape. The evangelist renders Satan just as personal as Christ. Both these characters are historical or both are allegorical. Besides, the same reason which would exclude Satan from proper personality in the temptation would exclude the proper personality of those angels who came and ministered to Christ at its close. Neither Christ nor His apostles speak of Satan as a poetic figure or a fabulous image, an abstract evil principle, or power of evil, or genius of destruction, but as a solemn and literal entity. There is a definiteness about all their utterances concerning the awful character which stamps him with the indelible marks of life.

THE FLOATING CHURCH.

BISHOP POTTER ADMINISTERS THE RITE OF CONFIRMATION TO SAILORS.

Three bells sounded yesterday afternoon from the Floating Church, foot of Pike street. The waning light streamed through stained glass upon a nautical congregation, gathered to hear the rite of confirmation performed by the venerable Bishop Potter. There were mariners of all ages and degrees in the church—spruce captains bound to see their lads safe through the ordeal; rough mates with bright, golden haired children; pretty girls snuggling close to their lovers just returned from a distant voyage, and mothers come to pray for their sons far away upon the sea. They could scarcely be called a strictly religious and church-going congregation, for many of them knelt when the Gospel was being read, sat through the creed and hymns and bowed with extraordinary veneration when prayers were offered for the President. But they made up for those purely technical deficiencies by responding in large numbers to the call of the confirming Bishop. An ancient mariner, toothless, gray-haired and weather-beaten, was at first a little confused when a clergyman met him on the gangplank, and, pressing him to join the candidates, asked if he had been baptized. The old man hesitated for a while and then said he had been "most everything." Among other things, he thought he had been or still was a Roman Catholic, and was, therefore, disqualified. Reassured on this point, he allowed himself to be led to a seat, muttering that he had never yet found a successful remedy for shipwreck and might just as well try this. Meanwhile the Bishop had taken up his position, and all hands were piped on deck. They were mostly lads, and they advanced as timidly to the altar rail as though it were the quarter deck and the Bishop their admiral. He laid his hands on each and made them a short speech. "My lads," said he, in effect, "you have long been under the tow of your godfathers and godmothers. To-day you are cut adrift. The great enemy is bearing down on you and you must clear your decks for action. Do your duty, boys." The ancient mariner's eye was brighter as he rolled down the aisle and returned to his seat. Possibly he now thought himself safe from shipwreck. Possibly he understood the anthem which pealed from the little organ as the congregation left the church—"For He maketh the storm to cease, so that the waves thereof are still, and so He leadeth them to the haven where they would be."

CHURCH OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL.

THE RELIGIOUS CRISIS—SERMON BY REV. FATHER LAFFELY, OF PARIS.

Father Laffely, an eloquent clergyman, only recently arrived in this country, preached on the "Religious Crisis of Our Day" in the French Church of St. Vincent de Paul. There was no graver, no more pressing question, he said, before mankind than this religious crisis. People might ask, "Why discuss this matter? nothing good can be effected by it." Every age had its own weapons of attack against religion. The Voltaires, the Robespierres and the Marats of their time had used their own peculiar weapons, and what laurels rested upon their triumphs, so-called? So also to-day some would attack religion from the tribune, others in the columns of newspapers, while others, again, by force, would close the doors of the churches. In times past the faithful had been made martyrs of, and so to-day, in some of the most enlightened countries in the world, brave and good men were sent into exile for their conscience sake. In fact, there were three forces now operating all at once to attack the Church and religion—false science, sarcasm and violence. Everywhere one of these is the watchword of the hour. In looking over the map of Europe, whether in France, in Germany, in Italy or in Russia, everywhere there was a combined attack against the Church. It was a horrible, miserable, quietly conducted internecine war. These States, however, forgot one important thing—that religion is the superior life of a State, as well as of an individual, and that the moment it enters upon a war against religion the State really enters upon the period of its decadence.

IN THIS COUNTRY.

There was a time when we in Europe, continued the reverend speaker, pointed with pride upon the United States of America, and showed the masses of Europe how great, how free, how happy, how prosperous a country might be and still be religious—how this soil, sacred to freedom, upheld the life of the Church. But unfortunately the epidemic of non-belief, the epidemic of skepticism, was now also making rapid strides in these United States. And yet when the means of attack in the hands of the Church's enemies are canvassed, what do we find but the same old, old weapons. Nothing new. Ever and again that same cry of the non-existence of a God, the denial of Christ's divinity, and so on. But with this difference, that while in the past the hostile bands dared to attack only the walls they now endeavor to undermine and overthrow the entire edifice of God. Their ranks are being augmented day after day by new recruits. On inspecting the arms they use for the attack they are found valueless. They are worth nothing, indeed. After a thousand priests have been exiled and force has been applied religion continues to live, and the Church holds its head erect.

"THE SOUL THE SANCTUARY."

The soul is the sanctuary, after all, of man's ideas, and while force may for a time subdue the movements of the body containing that soul it never can, it never will, conquer man's conscience. Belligerent ideas may even for a time succeed in making man lukewarm, but, after all, there is a fascination in the practice of religion which no sophism nor sarcasm can conquer. Hence there exists no need of despairing. The good cause will triumph. The force of the past, the tortures of bygone ages, have only made martyrs of the faithful. These means of destroying the Church and the religion it preaches have not been successful, they have not made inroads, not even made a breach so that the enemy could effect a permanent lodgment. No more than these efforts of the past will the false philosophy of our day, aye, even the indifference now so prevalent, work injuriously upon the Church, man's last and most sacred asylum. Only it behooves those who stand on the Church's watchtower to sound the note of alarm, to keep the flock under their guard well in hand and ready for the onslaught, that all may know the dangers surrounding them, and knowing it be able to resist the avalanche of infidelity with that supreme courage and devotion which religious teachings and religious belief have installed in man's breast.

CHRISTIAN CONSOLATION.

"SHALL WE KNOW EACH OTHER IN HEAVEN?"—REV. T. DE WITT TALMAGE IN ST. LOUIS.

[BY TELEGRAPH TO THE HERALD.]

ST. LOUIS, MO., March 2, 1879.

The Rev. T. De Witt Talmage, D. D., of the Brooklyn Tabernacle, preached here to-day in the Central Presbyterian Church, of which Dr. Brank is pastor, corner of Lucas and Garrison avenues. The edifice was crowded to its utmost capacity. Dr. Talmage read a lesson, descriptive of the wall of heaven, from the Book of Revelation. He preached on the question "Shall we know each other in heaven?" The text was taken from II. Samuel, xii., 23—"I shall go to him."

There is a very sick child, said Dr. Talmage, in the abode of David the King. Disease, which stalks up the dark lane of the poor and puts its smothering hand on the lip and nostril of the man and master, also knocks at the palace door and, bending over the pillow, blows into the face of a young prince the frosts of pain and death. Tears are wine to the King of Terrors. Seven days have passed. There are in that great house two eyelids gently closed, two little hands folded, two little feet silent, one heart still. The servants come to bear the tidings to the king. He wipes away the tears from his eyes and clears the choking grief from his throat and exclaims, "I shall go to him." Was David right or wrong? If we part on earth will we meet again in the next world? Is this doctrine of future recognition of friends in heaven a guess, a myth, a whim, or is it a granite foundation upon which to build a glorious hope?

"POSITIVE CERTAINTY."

The object of this sermon is to take this theory out of the region of surmise and speculation into the region of positive certainty. I believe that I can bring an accumulation of argument to bear upon this matter which will prove the doctrine of future recognition as plainly as that there is any heaven at all, and that the kiss of reunion at the celestial gate will be as certain as the dying kiss at the door of this sepulchre. The doctrine is not so often positively stated in the Word of God as implied, and you know, my friends, that that is, after all, the strongest mode of affirmation. What consolation would it be to David to go to his child if he would not know him?

We read in the first book of the Bible, Abraham died and was gathered to his people, Jacob died and was gathered to his people, Moses died and was gathered to his people. What people? Why, their friends, their comrades, their old companions. It cannot mean anything else. So in the very beginning of the Bible four times that is taken for granted. The whole New Testament is an arbor over which this doctrine creeps like a luxuriant vine, full of the purple clusters of consolation. The Bible says we are to be higher than the angels, and if they have the power of recognition, shall not we have as good eyesight and as good capacity? Why, Paul talked about meeting his congregation in heaven and recognizing them.

OTHER ARGUMENTS.

The rejection of this theory implies the entire obliteration of our memory. Can it be possible that we shall forget forever those with whose walk, look, manner, we have been so long familiar? Will death come and with a sharp, keen blade hew away this faculty of memory? You know very well that our joy in any circumstance is augmented by the companionship of our friends. We cannot see a picture with less than four eyes, or hear a song with less than four ears. We want some one beside us with whom to exchange glances and sympathies, and I suppose the joy of heaven is to be augmented by the fact that we are to have our fireside with us. Heaven is not a bedwarfing—it is an expansion. Here I see you with only two eyes, but there the soul shall have a million eyes. It will be immortality gazing on immortality, ransomed spirit in colloquy with ransomed spirit, victor beside victor. When John Evans, the Scotch minister, was seated in his study, his wife came in and said to him, "My dear, do you think we will know each other in heaven?" He turned to her and said, "My dear, do you think we will be bigger fools in heaven than we are here?" (Laughter.)

Again, I accept this doctrine of future recognition because the world's expectancy affirms it. In all lands and ages this theory is received, and under all forms of religion. Under every sky, by every river, in every zone the theory is adopted, and so I say a principle universally implanted must be God implanted, and hence a right belief. The argument is irresistible.

FEATURES OF THE SOUL.

Again I adopt this theory because there are features of moral temperament and features of the soul that will distinguish us forever. How do we know each other in this world? Is it merely by the color of the eye, the length of the hair or the facial proportions? Oh, no! It is by the disposition as well, using the word in the very best sense and not in the bad sense, and if in the dust our body should perish and lie there forever, and there should be no resurrection, still the soul has enough features and the disposition has enough features to make us distinguishable. I can understand how in sickness a man may become so delirious that he will not know his own friends, but will we be blasted with such insufferable idiocy that standing beside our best friends for all eternity we will never guess who they are?

A MOTHER'S JOY.

Never in this world have we an opportunity to give thanks to those to whom we are spiritually indebted. The joy of heaven, we are told, is to be augurated by a review of life's work. There is a mother before the throne of God. You say her joy is full. Is it? You say there can be no augmentation of it. Cannot there be? Her son was a wanderer and a vagabond on the earth when that good mother died. He broke her old heart. She left him in the wilderness of sin. Years pass, and that son repents of his crimes and gives his heart to God and becomes a useful Christian and dies and enters the gates of heaven. You tell me that that mother's joy cannot be augmented. Let them confront each other, the son and the mother. "Oh!" she says to the angels of God, "rejoice with me. The dead is alive again and the lost is found. Hallelujah! I never expected to see this lost one come back."

CROSSING THE RIVER.

One more reason why I am disposed to accept this doctrine of future recognition is, that so many in their last hour on earth have confirmed this theory. I speak not of persons who have been delirious in their last moments and knew not what they were about, but of persons who died calmly and who were not naturally superstitious. Often the glories of heaven have struck the dying pillow and the departing man has said that he saw and heard those who had gone away from him. How often it is that in their dying moments parents see their departed children and children see their departed parents. I came down to the banks of the Mohawk River. It was evening, and I wanted to go over the river, and so I waved my hat and I shouted; and after awhile I saw some one waving on the opposite bank, and I heard him shout, and the boat came across and I got in and was transported. And so I suppose it will be in the evening of our life. We will come down to the river of death and give a signal to our friends on the other shore and they will give a signal back to us, and the boat comes and our departed kindred are the oarsmen. The fires of the setting day will tinge the tips of their paddles. In my first settlement at Belleville a plain man said to me:—"What do you think I heard last night? I was in the room where one of my neighbors was dying. He was a good man, and he said that he heard the angels of God singing before the throne. I haven't much poetry about me, but I listened and heard them too." Said I, "I have no doubt of it." Why, we are to be taken up to heaven at last by ministering spirits. Who are they to be? Souls that went up from Madras or Antioch or Jerusalem? Oh, no; our glorified kindred are going to troop around us. Heaven is not a stately, formal place, as I sometimes hear it described; a very frigidity of splendor, where people stand on cold formalities and go around about with heavy