

The Star of Zion.

ORGAN OF THE AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL ZION CHURCH IN AMERICA.

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TOPICS OF THE TIMES.

The Philadelphia Religious Census.

BY W. H. DAVENPORT.

Talleyroad is credited with observing that all wise men have but one religion, and upon being questioned what that religion was, the evasive and dexterous old Frenchman replied: "It is something wise men do not tell."

The experience of the zealous Christians who have been engaged in taking a religious census of the Quaker city has resulted in encountering a great number of reticent and secretive persons who doubtless share in the same philosophy. It is the consensus of public thought that accurate information of a statistical character which is designed to classify adherents of the various religious sects, dogmas or opinion is very difficult to obtain. There are not a few people of denominational connections and affiliations who are somewhat hazy and uncertain as to their "religious belief." There are others who regard any effort to obtain their religious belief as impudent; and the zeal of denominations in exploiting their numerical strength is sometime to be regarded with the same caution with which we regard the padded assessment list of the ward politician for it is frequently like the magnifying process in which the valorous Falstaff said the men in Backram grow on the highway at Gadshill.

The Zion church however, has been very modest in its numerical pretensions. It was only a few days ago when a Bethel Bishop credited us with having a few more than nineteen hundred churches, and no one has come forward with accredited figures to dispute it. But while it is believed that the religious census in Philadelphia may not have the most trustworthy value, yet it is interesting, incomplete as it is, to note that there are probably more than 257,000 families in this city which would signify that the present population is at least 1,300,000.

But in glancing over the figures of the returns, we are astonished to find that one of the most striking features of this compilation taken under protestant auspices is that out of 121,000 families, 30,220 are credited to the Roman Catholic church, which is nearly twice as many as the next highest, the Methodists. The Roman Catholics have claimed in Philadelphia a population of 340,000, so these protestant figures seem to substantiate that claim. These figures are also interesting in that the native American party was formed for the express purpose of checking the advance of Roman Catholicism. It has not succeeded, for in the United States there are probably 9,000,000 Catholics, or about one in every eight in the population; in Philadelphia about one in every

four. It does not appear that the Methodists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Baptists or the Lutherans have been in a more flourishing condition.

In Philadelphia the Presbyterians last year laid claim to 46,000 members; Methodists 45,000; the Episcopalians to 35,000; the Baptists to 31,000 and the Lutherans to 18,000; and the figures of the census taken seem in the main to point to an agreement with the above figures. But there are at least twenty-eight other forms of Christian organization represented in the census, but these are only meagerly reported at this writing.

Under the head of "Atheist and Agnostics" the census takers found only eleven persons who openly avowed themselves as such. But it is probable in the two houses where information was refused, or in the two which are set down in the category of no preference there are others of Atheistic and Agnostic proclivities. But there are more churches in Philadelphia according to the population in 1900 than there were in 1800. Infidelity is not gaining ground nor is the church losing its hold upon the masses.

A notable fact however in connection with this census may be touched upon. The Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal church have frankly admitted that American Methodism is facing a grave situation, and they have consequently issued an appeal for a week of abstinence and prayer for the strengthening of their church along all lines "Our statistics," they affirm, "for the last year show a decrease in the number of our members. Year before last our advance was checked. Last year our advance column has been forced back a little. The lost ground is paved with the dead. We are surrounded by powerful enemies. The attack is on every side. It is high time for every Methodist to take himself or herself to prayer, to call mightily on God for help, that each one may know for himself that he is accepted of God, that in this testing time each one may hear the Lord say: Be of good cheer; thy sins are forgiven thee."

Among other things mentioned in Bishop Clinton's strong letter about the Chicago church it may be worth while to observe the impossibility of running a great Connection by passing the hat around to ministers. Sicknes, debts, small salaries, connectional obligations as well as local demands are all against such a scheme. With a church extension department in working order the \$3000.00 could have been secured in a twinkling. And we point no finger of scorn at Warner. The collapse of that work was no fault of his, nor our stars, but of us. There was but little for it to rest upon.

Camden, N. J.

THE SERMON

On the Mount Analyzed.

BY BISHOP C. R. HARRIS, D. D.

II

Having found a subject and a text for our sermon, let us proceed with its analysis. A sermon has three well defined parts: an introduction, a body and a conclusion. These are analogous to the parts of a man—the head, body and limbs.

If you want to get an idea of who or what a man is you look at his head, especially his face; to judge what a sermon is you look at the introduction. The body of the sermon is the largest portion and contains most of its important matter, like a man's body. The limbs enable a man to do his work and the conclusion is what makes the sermon effective.

The object of the introduction is to prepare the minds of the hearers for a favorable reception of the message to be delivered. Scanning the first part of our sermon we see that verses 3-16 answer this end. The kingdom of heaven was a subject of great interest to every Jew and whatever promised information concerning it would be heartily welcomed. Besides happiness is sought by all men, and in this portion of the sermon the preacher points out how happiness may be attained. The latter part of this passage verses 13-16 form a transition thought to the main body of the sermon.

As a help in understanding and remembering a sermon as well as in delivering it from notes, we usually subdivide the main parts designating each division by a word or phrase which will suggest the matter contained in the subdivision. We will entitle the first part of the introduction as "The elements of happiness," or "The elements of character essential to true happiness," and the second part as "The value of Christians to the world."

Let us now look for the conclusion of the sermon. We judge it to be verses 15-27 of the seventh chapter. It consists of instruction setting forth a motive, a warning and an encouragement to duty, to spur the hearers to hearty, sincere and constant obedience to the law of Christ. The intervening portion of the sermon must be the body—which we now subdivide.

1. The first thought presented is "The value of the Mosaic Law" or "Obedience to Law essential to Salvation." Chapter five verses 17-20.

2. Next, verses 21-48, come expositions of the Mosaic law or Christ's construction of certain laws. These relate to (1) murder (2) adultery (3) profanity, (4) the duty of non-resistance (5) the principle underlying all obedience to law, namely love.

3. The next portion, chapter six verses 1-18, we identify as

"Means of Grace" such as (1) charitable deed, (2) prayer, (3) fasting.

4. Next follow, "Motives" adapted to lead to a Christian life [6:19, 7:6] namely (1) true riches (2) sincerity of purpose (3) trust in God (4) reluctance in condemning (5) Christian reticence or self respect.

In the conclusion as we have seen are striking illustrations of the benefits of conforming to the law of obedience, containing (1) warning to Christians (2) to hypocrites and finally an illustration calculated to vividly impress the whole sermon upon the minds and hearts of the audience.

For convenience we will now form the heads and subheads into an

OUTLINE OF THE SERMON.

Subject—Obedience to God's Law Necessary to Salvation.

Text—"Obey my voice and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people."—Jeremiah 7:23.

I. [Introduction.]

1. Elements of happiness. [5:3-12].
2. Value of Christians to the world. [13-16]

II. [Body of the Sermon.]

1. Value of the Mosaic Law.
2. Expositions of the Law:
 - (1) Murder
 - (2) Adultery
 - (3) Profanity
 - (4) Duty of Non-resistance
 - (5) Principle underlying all law—Love.
3. Means of grace.
 - (1) Charitable deeds
 - (2) Prayer
 - (3) Fasting.
4. Motives of the Christian life
 - (1) True riches
 - (2) Sincerity of purpose
 - (3) Faith
 - (4) Reluctance to condemn
 - (5) Christian reticence or self-respect.

III. [Conclusion.]

- (1) Warnings to the Christians
- (2) Warnings to the hypocrites
- (3) Illustration: The house built on the Rock.

How necessary to salvation is obedience to God's Law!

Rev. R. Seymour, of Chicago, writes: In your issue of February 22 appears an unfair statement from Bishop G. W. Clinton relative to me, giving the reason why Zion did not secure the Railroad Chapel in Chicago. He leads the public to believe that Seymour was the cause of Zion not getting it. After I came to Chicago in September I received an option on the property for Zion which I sent to Dr. Goler to sign, and then sent it to Bishop Clinton. That indenture held good until January 15th, and had I told the company a hundred times that Zion did not want the property, that would have amounted to nothing, if they had come with the money on or before the option expired. I am accused of something that I am no more guilty of than a man who never heard of the affair. Kindly publish this.

Bishop Hood's Appointments.

Mch	18th	Brooklyn, N. Y.
"	20th	Mamaroneck
"	21st	Port Chester
"	23rd	New Haven
"	25th, at night	Bridgeport, Conn
"	28th	Derby
"	29th	Waterbury
"	30th	Providence

IS REV. JONES RIGHT?

"Some General Rules, etc.," Reviewed.

GEO. CLINTON CLEMENT.

For several weeks a series of articles upon the General Rules coming from the pen of our good friend and brother, Rev. E. D. W. Jones has solicited attention in the STAR.

It seems from a careful reading of these same articles that the writer is seriously impressed with what he deems the "irrelevancy" of many of the specifications in the aforesaid Rules; and being desirous of conferring a benefit upon the Church of to-day and also of bequeathing a gracious love to posterity. Bro. Jones proceeds to set forth in general and in particular the defects as he sees them. He draws our sympathy, if for no other reason than that his articles express the fullness of his heart. Recognizing that such a discussion would be criticism, he declares his willingness to receive all the execrations that may be hurled against him—provided his paper helps the Church.

We accept what he says in good faith and presume that the purpose is to advance the Kingdom of Christ, at least so much of it as is embodied in the A. M. E. Zion Church. It is with the same friendly and loyal intentions that we attempt to examine his recent contribution "Some General Rules etc."

Perhaps while Bro. Jones was writing it did not occur to him that the Church is not to be classed with other institutions. There is no such thing as progressive christianity, subjectively, surely not, as a system of religion, with basic tents and principles the Church does not admit of change nor can it be improved. It is the perfect creature of an infinitely perfect mind.

The earliest formulated Rules of this same Church are found in Exodus the 20th chapter—I refer to the Ten Commandments. Now our brother proceeds to brand the rules of the A. M. E. Zion Church as superfluous and incompetent because (as he declares.) They are antiquated and disregarded. Is that a valid reason? Certainly not. The Decalogue is rather ancient. It was not yesterday that Linai trembled while the breath of the Almighty traced the "Thou Shalt" upon the quivering stone, and yet Christ himself declared that heaven and earth shall sooner pass away than that one jot or tittle of the law should.

Again suppose our General Rules are not heeded—admit that they are daily broken; still such a condition does not move the obsolescence and irrelevancy of the rules themselves "Thou shalt not steal," is just as binding to-day as (Continued on fifth page.)