

Pulpit Criticism.

A WEEKLY SHEET.

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CENTRAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

The pulpit of the Central Presbyterian Church was occupied by the Rev. P. McF. McLeod on the 12th inst.

There are graduates of Colleges who have lived to conclude that the educational course of such institutions, so far as it bears on the Bible, occupies at best about the same relation to that book, as does a skeleton to a healthy body. Such persons have discovered that more *may* be acquired outside any college than is *known* within; they therefore are unlikely to be dismayed when throughout the conflicting sections of the professing Church, they find the most perverted views of Divine truth propounded and advocated with an earnestness which while it is apt to create a smile, is not less apt to sadden. The minister, on the present occasion, selected as his text Matt. xiii. 33, and read, during the former part of the service, from Matt. xvi. 6 to the end of that chapter, with the idea of connecting the symbol of "leaven," as occurring in the respective passages. He reminded the writer of a dictum of the late Cardinal Wiseman, to the effect that "the Church does not gain by controversy," a dictum which it may be wise to weigh. The views of the persons whose designation, according to *themselves*, is that of "Brethren," in relation to the mode of interpreting the second of the unexplained parables, were the special object of attack, as indeed the views of this body are apt to be, (from an intelligible cause) in a Presbyterian pulpit.

Each of the contending parties takes a deeper interest in the study of Scripture than do several other sects, and a certain amount of ardour in the contest is the necessary consequence. An impartial observer is wont to perceive that each one commits precisely the fault for which he blames the other, that not uncommon one, the jumping at conclusions. A key which may serve to solve the difficulty arising from the conflicting views of religious men may be said to have been incidentally supplied by the application of the term "Separatists" to those whose views the preacher was opposing. The so-styled separatists doubtless regard themselves as having obeyed an inspired injunction to "come out from among them and *be separated*," &c., 2 Cor. vi. 17. It is only a matter of fairness to acknowledge that whether the action, on their part, were right or wrong, they have contributed not a little to the study of Scripture. An endeavour shall therefore be made to present the principle of interpretation of these instructive parables, *supposed to be* advocated by them, the principle against which Mr. McLeod contended throughout his discourse. Separatists (by way of adhering to the above designation) maintain that much instruction may be gained by observing the mode in which symbols are used in Scripture, as, for instance, with regard to the parable immediately preceding that which is at present under notice, in which a tree is used as a symbol of a