

Pulpit Criticism.

A WEEKLY SHEET.

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THE BAPTIST CHURCH, ALEXANDER STREET.

The writer wended his way to the church above-named in expectation of hearing something solid and good from the pulpit, and in that expectation he was not disappointed. Maturity of years, he felt, from the first, involved mellowness of judgment in the person of the gentleman who conducted the service—the Rev. Joshua Denovan. The portion of Scripture selected by Mr. D. for reading, extended from Rom. viii. 11, to the end of the chapter. In commenting on this portion, he gave us some important renderings, and omitted others; "*The creation* was made subject to vanity," and "*in hope that the creation* itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption." (vs. 20, 21), were the most important of the passages corrected; and it would have been well if the correction had extended to "we are saved *in hope*," (instead of "by,") v. 24. The sermon was based on Eph. i. 13, 14. "In whom (Christ) also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise or his glory." Before entering on the subject of this disquisition, the writer must indicate a moral consideration, which, so far as himself was concerned, paved the way

for a favourable impression of the sermon; *he was aware that, in the present case, there is no stipulation between the pastor and his flock*, and, unless he was greatly mistaken, this important fact might be *felt* throughout the service; there was not a particle of the hireling element about it. In addressing himself to the exposition of the above-selected passage, Mr. D. explained that the word rendered "earnest" signifies a deposit paid by a purchaser when a bargain is made; the purport of the deposit being to confirm the purchase, and to pledge the ultimate payment of the purchase-money. He added that this practice obtains among the Arabs at the present day, and that they still use the word *arrabon* ("earnest") in relation to it, a word which has been transferred from the Arabic language to the Greek. The word "arles," common in the rural parts of England and Scotland, Mr. D. said was traceable to the same root; the word signifies a pledge of agreement and payment. The custom of "arles" used to take two forms; (1) in relation to the transfer of lands; (2) in hiring farm servants of both sexes; the transfer of land could not be legal unless the buyer and seller repaired to the spot, and the seller illustrated his *earnestness* by giving the