

Pulpit Criticism.

A WEEKLY SHEET.

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THE KNOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

SECOND NOTICE.

Romanism is but the reflex of the human heart, and that reflex would appear to extend to the Knox College, to judge from the mode in which the Scriptures were treated in the ministrations of Professor McLaren on the 19th ult. In commenting on the Professor's dereliction with regard to the exposition of Scripture, while conversing with a minister whose vocation is to "moderate" the possibly immoderate, the writer was met by the defence—"The word of God is capable of doing its own work." They who may be disposed to acquiesce in such a sentiment as the foregoing, may therefore be content to be plunged into a slough of homiletic "thirdlies," by way of substitute for the Book of books, but for the writer's part, and he trusts on behalf of many another, he would exclaim—From such an infiction "Good Lord deliver us." The formal invocation of the Almighty's blessing on the mere reading of portions of scripture, to the neglect of their elucidation, is, in the judgment of the writer, simply a solemn mockery; it has been found possible to make some observations on the former of the two portions read by the professor, on the 19th ult., and on the present occasion, it may be desirable to consider if the latter portion do not need comment; that consisted of John x. 1-18. It would not have involved any great effort of intellect on the part of the Professor, to have connected the 39th and the subsequent verses of the 9th chapter with the 10th. "For judgment I am come into this world, that they who see not might see; and that they who see might be made blind," &c. This declaration becomes the more interesting when it is connected with Jno. v. 22-27. in the latter of these verses we read "and hath given him authority to exercise judgment because he is the Son of man." This same glorious person, throughout the Old Testament, is described as *Adon* which means "God in judgment," and wherever the name "Lord" occurs, in the O. T. printed in small letters, (as the name is here,) that is uniformly represented by, the name "Adon," in the Hebrew. In Dan. ix. 17. the prophet pleads with God "for the Lord's sake." Reference to Ps. ii. 9-12. Eze. ii. 1. and xxxiv. 16.

Dan. vii. 13, 14, and Jude 15, provided the person so referring were adequately instructed in scripture, would go far to teach an average congregation more than they are likely to know. In Eze. xxxiv. 15, we have this same judge described as "feeding his flock, and causing them to lie down," bearing the while His covenant title "*the Lord Jehovah.*" (Heb.) This necessarily connects itself with Jno. x.4, wherein we read of His "putting forth his own sheep," and again with the types, where we read (Numb. x 33,) "And the ark of the covenant of Jehovah went before them in the three days journey to search out a resting place for them." The emphatic repetition of the statements "I am the door," (vs. 7 and 9) and "I am the good shepherd," (vs. 11 and 14 with the triple declaration respecting the "laying down of life," (vs. 15, 17, and 18,) and *this* in its various aspects, one might have supposed to be of sufficient importance to demand comment. The reading of vs. 14 and 15 as follows, renders them far more intelligible—"I am the good Shepherd, and know my sheep, and mine know me: even as the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father;" &c. The delicate subject of "the hireling fleeing because he is an hireling and caring not for the sheep" (v 13.) is one on which it is needless to make further comment than that the greatest bane of the professing church consists in certain persons receiving calls to "enlarged spheres of usefulness," accompanied by the consideration of an extra thousand a year. It would have been too much to have expected the Professor to wax eloquent on so essentially sublunary a subject as this, and accordingly he reserved his forces for what himself, and probably a section of his hearers regarded as the grand feature of the performance, namely the essay; the writer's objection to that composition, like the essay itself, is divisible into *three heads*, it was characterised by platitudes, was unedifying, and erroneous

in more respects than one. It was according to custom, hung on the peg of a text, that text consisted of Ps. xxiii. 4. The inevitable *three divisions* consisted of (1) the case anticipated, (2) the confidence exhibited, (3), the reason assigned. It is fair to presume that the Professor will rejoice that it brought home to the heart of *one* of his hearers, a familiar passage of Scripture with renewed power; that passage is "What is the chaff to the wheat? saith Jehovah." Jer. xxiii, 28. It did not appear to have occurred to the professor that this world *may* be "the valley of the shadow of death," on which the sweet psalmist descants, hence he adopted the more general idea that the phrase applies to the article of death through which most christians as well as others, expect to pass; he was doubtless referring to the precarious condition in which the wife of the regular minister was lying at the time, and which to the disappointment probably of that gentleman's hearers, necessitated his temporary absence; the circumstance gave occasion to the Professor to ventilate those pious blasphemies which are but too characteristic of most pulpits; said blasphemies coolly attribute all sickness and suffering to the arbitrary will of the Almighty; "the Shepherd may lead through severe sickness, disease" &c," were the words of the preacher on this occasion. Does he not know that sickness is the mere penal brand of transgression, on the part of some person (not always that of the sufferer) of some Divine law? Such twaddle as that of the Almighty leading us through disease, &c., may be a very convenient theory to propagate, in the interest of the medical profession, but it is more than time it was banished from the pulpits of the day. Akin to the afore-mentioned twaddle, is the ordinary teaching with regard to the declaration of Moses, in Psalm xc. 10. "The days of our years are threescore years and ten," &c. This language was applied by Moses to the Israelites'

realization of the execution of the sentence pronounced against them on account of their disobedience, as anyone may perceive who will refer to the 7th, 9th, 10th and 11th verses; were it otherwise, the statement of the tenth verse would contradict the promise of Gen. vi. 3, and the record of Moses' own life, as chronicled in Deut. xxxi. 2, and xxxiv. 7. As an indirect confirmation of the accuracy of the view above enunciated, it may be well to observe that animal life ordinarily extends to four times the duration required for it to arrive at maturity; thirty years are required for man to attain that condition, a circumstance which receives more or less confirmation from Gen. xli. 46, Numb. iv. 3, 23, 30, 2 Sam. v. 4, and Luke iii. 23. That human life in our era does not often exceed fourscore years is traceable to deterioration of the species, and so far as the circumstance relates to Psalm xc, is a mere coincidence. Another case in which "the schoolmaster was abroad," on the 19th ult. relates to what he termed "the Sabbath;" he informed us that we were assembled on a day which was signalized as that of the day of rest in connection with creation and redemption. According to Ex. xx. 11, the complacent rest of creation took place on *the seventh day*; and according to Mark xvi. 1, it was "*when the sabbath was past, and very early in the morning (of) the first day of the week*" that Mary Magdalen and her companions discovered that "He is risen." *The first day of the week*, and the Lord's day (Rev. i. 10) are notoriously identical, and have no more connection with the Sabbath that was buried with the Lord, than they have with Wednesday: *this* one is entitled to suppose a college professor ought to know. The best part of the service of the 19th, in the writer's judgment, was the concluding hymn—"He leadeth me," and one of the worst parts was the stage effect sought to be produced by the uplifted sleeves; this culminated in the ridiculous, in the mimicry of

"blessing" with which the service terminated. When the Archbishop proceeds to Knox College, he will enlighten the Professor on this subject, and show him how his friend Leo (*the Lumen Cæli*) performs this part, when he generously extends his benediction *urbe et orbe*; the elevation of three fingers, after the fashion of the Israelitish high priest is the correct thing, and this is aped in more than one conventicle in Toronto. It may be well that Shakespeare did not witness these "antics" which men perform before high heaven, or he might possibly have written—the *church* is all "a stage, and all the men and women merely players."

TALMUDICAL LAWS.

See Mark vii, 1-23, in relation to the former group:

"Every one who washes his hands must attend to four things:—1st, To the water, that it be not unlawful for the washing of hands; 2nd to the measure, that there be a quartern for the two hands; 3rd. to the vessel that the water where the washing is performed, be in a vessel. 4th. to the washer, that the water come with force from him who pours." Hilchoth Berachoth, vi. 6.

"We have explained long ago, that the washing and bathing of the hands, are derived from the words of the scribes." Hilchoth Mikvaoth xi. 1.

"Though he should only have enough water to drink, he is to wash his hands with a part of it, and then to eat, and to drink the remainder." Hilchoth Berachoth, vi. 19.

"It is necessary to be very careful in washing of hands, for every one who despises the washing of hands, is guilty of excommunication." Orach Chaim, § 158.

"Whom did they excommunicate? Eleazar ben Chatzar, who despised the washing of hands; and when he was dead, the tribunal sent, and had a great stone laid on his coffin, to teach thee that of every one who is excommunicated, and dies in his excommunication, the coffin is stoned by the tribunal." Talmud, Berachoth, fol. 19, col. 1.

"Every one who eats bread without washing of hands, is as guilty as if he had committed fornication." Sotah, fol. iv., col. 2.

"Although it has been pronounced lawful to kindle fire on the holy day, even where not absolutely necessary, yet it is unlawful to extinguish fire, even though it had been kindled for the preparation of food; for the extinguishing of fire is

work, and is not at all necessary for the dressing of food. And as fire is not to be extinguished, so neither is a candle to be extinguished, and whoever extinguishes is to be flogged, just as he who weaves or builds. Fire is not to be extinguished in order to save property on a holy day, no more than on the Sabbath. On the contrary, one lets it burn and goes away." Hilchoth, Jon. Tox, C. iv. 2, 4.

"It is unlawful to extinguish fire on a holy day, even though a man should see his house burning. It is unlawful to extinguish split wood, either for the sake of saving it from being burned or to keep a pot from being smoked, that is to say, if he can keep it from being smoked without extinguishing the fire, as by removing it from one fire to another. But if he have not another fire, and if the pot must be smoked unless he extinguish it, then the extinguishing is lawful, that the pot may not be smoked." Orach Turim, Orach Chajim, 514.

"When one makes a fire and puts on a pot, it is necessary to be very careful in the arranging of the wood, and the mode of setting the pot upon it, so that there should be no resemblance to building; for Rav-Judah has said, every pile of wood begun from the top to the bottom is lawful, from the bottom to the top (on a holy day) is unlawful." Baal Turim (Orach Chajim, 502.)

Pliny (A. D. 107) informed the Emperor Trajan, that "the whole of the fault, or error" of the Christians "lay in this, that they were wont to meet together, on a stated day, before it was light, and sing, among themselves alternately, a hymn to Christ, as God." Pliny was governor of Pontus and Bithynia, and was specially commissioned by the Roman Emperor to inquire into the tenets of those who were undergoing a cruel persecution on account of their religious belief. Paganism regarded Christ as an usurper of Divine honours. It hated Christianity because it proclaimed Him as Jehovah,

to the entire exclusion of its multitudinous divinities.

Tacitus and Suetonius, each refer to the expectation which prevailed in their day, that a conqueror should rise in Judea to govern the world. Suetonius writes—"there had prevailed all over the east, an ancient and constant notion that the fates had decreed, that about that time, there should come out of Judea those who should obtain the empire of the world."

Suetonius also quotes a prediction cited by Julius Mirathus,— "Nature should bring forth a son who would be king of the Roman people." Prideaux.

NUMBERS.

144,000. Rev. vii. 4, and xiv. 1. "I regard this as a number indicative of completeness; twelve is the number of instrumental agency. The mind is directed, not as by seven, to the finished completeness of the object presented, but rather to the results that are to be produced by or through it. Agency towards others in blessing, is specially the character of the heavenly city, and consequently the number twelve is repeatedly connected with it. Its provisions of blessedness are not intended to end within itself. The patriarchs— are twelve; the Apostles, are twelve; the tribes, through whom will be brought to bear upon mankind the earthly agency, whereby the nations will be blessed, are twelve. Such agency, if prospered, necessarily acts in the way of accumulation, and is capable of producing another agency similar to itself. Hence, I think, the number 144,000—twelve multiplied into itself, would be applied where the persons spoken of are at once the result of instrumental agency, and are suited for similar agency themselves. Combination and multiplication of blessing is a happy principle in the hand of God." From B. W. Newton's Thoughts on the Apocalypse.