

40 - 207 - 12 S.

November 4th, 1882.

No. 43.

# Pulpit Criticism.

THE DISCIPLES' MEETING,  
CORNER JAMES AND LOUISA STREETS.

(Continued from No. 41.)

It is not what one would desire, to be obliged to say of a personal friend, that one cannot believe in the healthy amalgamation of politics and piety, but the attempted blending of these antagonistic elements, on the part of the oracle of this institution, serves, in the writer's judgment, to account for the hallucinations which characterize this gentleman's attempts to expound so obscure a book, as (in view of thirteen different interpretations of it) he may venture to designate the book of Revelation. The writer regrets this the more, as he happens to know that the gentleman referred to is at least *the possessor* of a superb book on the subject of the book of Revelation, which, were he to study it with the attention it merits, might, one would suppose, be instrumental in removing much dust from his organs of vision. Our friend treated the communications of the Lord to John as a fulfilment of the promise to Peter, in Matt. xvi, 18, "On this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hades shall not prevail against it," and he represented it as a direct and exclusive personal communication of the Lord to the Apostle, apparently with the object of excluding all reference to the Holy Spirit, for the community to which he belongs, ignore the personality of the Spirit. The salutation of Ch.

i, 4, the sevenfold exhortation, "He who hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches," and such a passage as that contained in John xv, 26, will lead most Christians to a widely different conclusion. The "angels" of the seven churches are, by this gentleman, represented to be running messengers, of the order of our electric despatch company's boys, so that, according to that interpretation, if the angel stopped to play on his way from Ephesus to Smyrna, himself and the church he represented were to be "removed," etc.; very remarkable communications, these epistles, if addressed to an expressman! We are satisfied our friend has not the remotest idea of rendering that which is sacred, ridiculous, but when the "seals" are represented as unfolding the history of the world from the beginning of the Christian era, to the return of the Lord, when the gospel of Christ is said to be the chief theme of the book, when the white horse is supposed to symbolize the gospel, the red horse, the opposition to it, etc., we can only observe that the *general* advice given by the speaker to "leave the study of the Book of Revelation till they learn better," might, with advantage, to our thinking, have a *particular* application. Of the particular chapter, which was supposed to be the subject of this

disquisition, we heard nothing, save that "the description of heaven which it contains, was supposed to impress men with the importance of the Christian Churches." Among other statements which one might imagine (did one not know it to be otherwise) to have been delivered in irony, was this, that "Christ is (supposed to be) beholding the order and steadfastness of faith of the churches." As Ps. cxxx was one of the portions of scripture read during the service, we will take leave of the harangue on the subject of the Book of Revelation, in order to repeat (what was shown in a former paper) that it is one of the group, extending from Ps. cxx to cxxxiv, which were sung by the Jews, at successive stages, on their return from Babylon: the Jews understand the first of the group to relate to their present condition, of which the Babylonish captivity was a forecast. It is observable that in the first seven occurrences of the name "Lord," in Ps. cxxx, a different title is used alternately in the Hebrew; this, as is always the case, is indicated by the change of type: a Jew once remarked to the writer with respect to the name which appears in small type—"We regard that as the merciful aspect of the Almighty," to which the writer rejoined—"That's just what it is,—the Messiah."

THE METROPOLITAN CHURCH.

The service at the church above named was conducted by the Rev. Dr. Rose and the Rev. Hugh Johnston on the morning of the 29th ult. If "open confession be good for the soul," we will commence by observing that the mere designation "Metropolitan" would of itself pre-

pare us for the exhibition of Methodism in its worst aspect; all the appointments of the Church, without and within, correspond with its title; the manifest drift of the whole being financial success, and rivalry with other churches. It is contrary both to one's principle and sentiment to protest against the utterances of elderly men, but when revealed truth is at stake, it becomes a matter of necessity. The reiterated supplications of the elder of the two officiating members, couched as they were in prose and verse, conflicted so definitely with the utterances of Scripture, that they have reminded the writer of what he has been for some time contemplating—the desirability of formulating a catechism for the clergy—he will therefore respectfully remind his venerable friend that He whom the said friend has been, no doubt for many years endeavouring to serve, was heralded to the world as the "The Lamb of God who beareth the sin of the world;" (John, 1. 29.) Is it necessary to point again and again to passages such as the following, because the teachers of the day pray and preach as if they had no existence. "And you, . . . hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;" blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; Col. ii, 13, 14. Similar teaching, though not of the sects, is that of the Bible, as may be seen by reference to 1 Pet. ii, 24; to Heb. vii, 27, and ix, 12, 26, 28, among other passages. This is scarcely the place in which to argue further than to observe that this Biblical teaching was entirely set at naught by the minister's prayers to have his own and his

fellow-worshipper's sins "blotted out;" it may nevertheless be desirable to add that provision for *daily adjustment*: of which all Christians must be conscious, is made on the same principle that it was with Israel of old, and finds its expression in the words, "If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John, i, 9.) It thus becomes necessary to dilate on the elements of Christianity, because gentlemen who have been swift to arrogate to themselves the preposterous figment, designated "D. D.," have not as yet learned their alphabet. Similarly might the prayers "for the Spirit" be dealt with, had we space and time, and the kindred subject of the Evening's discourse in the same Church—"Take not thy Holy Spirit from me;" but until persons learn to discriminate between the Old Testament and the New, and between the several portions of the latter, hopeless confusion and contradiction will be the inevitable result. They who were supposed to be "destitute of the comforts of this life," and yet were assumed to be present, were kindly remembered in prayer; in what corner of this carpeted and cushioned edifice they might happen to be accommodated, we didn't enquire, but it is probable, that they occupied less room than did the choir. The pastor of the church, who was so considerate for the invisible destitute, has probably spent more time in committing his essays to memory, than he has to the study of Scripture, otherwise he could hardly have treated such a passage as "The Word of God is living and powerful, *and* is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart, neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight,"—he could

hardly have treated this as relating to the written word, which he did. This gentleman's "M. A." and "B. D." conspicuously posted up in the vestibule of the Church, appears to the writer to occupy about the same relation to those whom they concern, as that cabbage does which we have been accustomed to see extended at the end of a fork, by the rider of a donkey, in front of that quadruped's nose; the cabbage is found to stimulate the following, and unless it happened to be frozen, would probably exceed the worth of the degree. To save appearances, two portions of Scripture were read at this service, Ps. LXXXIV, and 2 Pet. iii. As respects the psalm, the reading of which was intended to lead us to conclude that we were assembled in an "amiable tabernacle," it must suffice to observe that some exposition of it, was given in No. 23, of the "Criticism," and as of course any attempt at elucidation of either portion, was not to be expected from a "B. D.," we must say a few words on 2 Pet. iii. "Sincere mind is preferable to "pure," v. 1; "The earth coming into existence," instead of "standing out," etc. v. 5, "loss" instead of "perdition," v. 7, (see Rev. xx, 4, 5.) "with the Lord," is equivalent to "in the sight of the Lord," and the passage stands related to the concluding words of the epistle, where we have the expression "to the day of the age," instead of "for ever," "a great crash" is preferable to "noise," v. 10, "conduct" to "conversation," v. 11, "a benefit," is better than "salvation," v. 15, and "unrestrained" would be more suitable than "wicked," v. 17. It must suffice to add that the phrase "the day of the Lord" is uniformly applied to that aspect of Christ's arrival which is connected with judgment. That

factor of the "metropolitan" enterprize styled the quire, possesses an experienced advertiser, in the person of the pastor; the reverend gentleman informed us that a forthcoming musical performance would be "of the highest order of merit, while the tickets were at the lowest price;" money, we have heard, is the salt of Methodism, and we are not inclined to doubt its preserving power. The essay delivered by this gentleman may be described as a fine piece of bubble-blowing; of the prismatic hues of the bubbles, we caught a few reflections; when speaking of a river, we learned that "its full volume of rejoicing waters fell into the distant sea," and when by and bye, we reached "the sky," we heard that "the sky was happy (like the river) in the morning light;" "in describing the beauty of a face, we learned that the nose is a "leading article" thereof; we had previously heard of persons *following* their noses, we are not therefore inclined to dispute the assertion that the nose leads; fields were of course clothed, as it becomes fields to be, "in a rich livery of green;" considering the varied application of the word "closet," we should say, that its emphatic repetition in a sermon, was somewhat too suggestive to be regarded as a "prismatic hue." Persons were said to "fling their unworthy *pence*" into the treasury of the Lord, after having previously spent pounds on themselves. The sentiments of the women were repeatedly appealed to, in relation to children, living, dying, and dead. Possibly some of the ladies would return to their homes to dream of their hopeful "waiving the sceptre, and wielding the destinies o fempires." A catch-penny dash at "mummery and millinery," in connection with worship must not be omitted from this cursory glance at these many-colored bubbles—all of them based on the three Biblical words "Grow in grace," 2 Pet. iii, 18. A simple mode of testing the appreciation, or otherwise, of a sermon, is that of observing if watches are opened during its delivery; we will hope this "B. D." was to such faults "a little blind" on this occasion. It is too common a practice to deliver these essays over an open Bible, as if there were any connection between the exercise of memory involved by their delivery, and that book; the book was only closed on this occasion, when the afore-named bubbles burst into what was supposed to be a practical application. The climax of this performance may be said to have been reached when the final hymn was pronounced by this "M. A.," "B. D." to be "*one of the sweetest hymns ever wrote.*" We do not care to say more of this descendant of Wesley, than that the brand of her illegitimacy is sadly too patent.