

Pulpit Criticism.

A WEEKLY SHEET.

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Published on Saturday, and sold at 20 Queen Street East, Toronto.

PRICE \$1.00 PER ANNUM.

Copies of any single number can be had, in quantities, at 15 cents per dozen.

CHRIST CHURCH, SIMCOE STREET.

(REFORMED EPISCOPAL.)

The service at this church was conducted by the Rev. R. A. Bilkey, "the Rector," on the 16th inst. Prior to commenting on it, it may be permissible to observe that in whatever position, secular or ecclesiastical, man has been placed on the earth, his career has been such as to culminate in evil, and hence to need *reform*; it may be presumed that the promoters of "the reformed episcopal" movement were of opinion that a crisis of evil had been attained by the episcopal church, and that the time for a new departure had arrived, hence the Church of Rome is presented with another grandchild in the *person* of this bantling. One is confronted with a wholesome principle on entering the building, which finds expression in the following announcement—"As the revenue of the Church is entirely derived from the free-will offerings of the congregation, from which all expenses have to be paid, it is earnestly requested that they be made as liberal as possible," &c. It would be more satisfactory to the writer, if he could speak in terms of commendation of what met his ears, when the service commenced. Although we are informed by a card intended for distribution, that the congrega-

tion "uses a purified and honest liturgy, a liturgy brought back to the true meaning of the Protestant reformers, and in which will be found not even a suggestion of sacerdotalism or sacramentarianism, nor yet one slumbering seed of possible Romanism,"—the sentence which follows would appear to suggest that a "slumbering seed" of that character is at no great distance, for we are assured therein that "the reformed" is "*a truly Episcopal Church, with orders as valid as any,*" &c. The opening words of this "purified and honest liturgy" disclosed the need of the further application of the pruning knife: there are passages of Scripture which when severed from their context can be made to convey an untruth, and the painfully familiar verse contained in Eze xviii. is one of them; does anyone believe that "when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive"? If such a person can be found, he believes what the whole Bible controverts. This passage was addressed to Israel under the law, and in its use by Christians illustrates their lack of that knowledge which would

lead them "rightly to divide the Word of God." The antiphonal recitation of the Psalms becomes practically an effectual barrier to any approach to *understanding them*, indeed the exercise of this faculty in regard to Divine truth appears to have fallen into desuetude. Part of Ex. xv. was read as "the first lesson," and it would probably have been more instructive to some of us, had we been informed that the passage "He is my God," &c. (ver. 2), should rather be "*this* (referring to the visible presence of the Shekinah) is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation;" again at ver. 11, anyone interested in the subject would prefer hearing the Almighty celebrated as "reverenced in praises, working wonders," and that the Shekinah or the Messiah is mentioned by name in the second occurrence of the title *Lord*, in the 17th verse. Again in John xi, part of which was read as "the second lesson," we might have considered that we had learned something, had we been informed that "whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall not die forever" (ver. 26), is preferable to "shall never die." When, in due course, the sermon was delivered, and that in the form of an essay, which was made to depend on Matt. ii. 18., as from a peg, it was startling to be informed, in view of the "then was fulfilled," of the previous verse, that this wailing on account of the murder of the infants, was a "less intentional fulfilment" of the prophecy of Jeremiah, than one supposed to be fulfilled elsewhere. Two circumstances in connection with this pathetic narrative, were overlooked by the minister: the first is the fact that Rachel died and was buried at Ephrath (Bethlehem), where her tomb remains to this day, situated between Jerusalem and Bethlehem; in this passage she is poetically represented as *dwelling there*, and watching the fate of her murdered progeny, the descendants of Benjamin, whose tribe was united to that of Judah; the wail of the heart-stricken mothers, which as it were awoke her, was so loud as to be heard from the height of Rama, at a distance of twelve miles. The name Rama should, therefore, be emphasised in reading the narrative—"In *Rama* was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not." This pulpit deliverance was either intended to apply to some bereaved parents in the congregation, or to that wide sphere of slaughter of the innocents which is being perpetrated daily; it gave lamentable evidence of that ecclesiastical mania which blasphemously represents "Christ's immeasurable love for children to be the solution of their untimely death." It is time the professional representatives of "the living God" laid the fact to heart that the Almighty's relation to ourselves is that of "giving us richly all things to enjoy," 1 Tim. vi. 17; if, therefore, the cemeteries are crowded with the frail wrecks of little children, and homes are rendered desolate by thousands, it is that the beneficent laws of the Allwise are transgressed on every hand, and the penal consequences of such transgression, which are intended as warnings, are so far wrested from their purport by the professed ministers of God, that we are told *authoritatively* that our Creator brings children into the world in order to snatch them away so soon as our heart-strings are woven around them; "grief is (said to be) wholesome discipline," &c., &c. One need not wonder at the widespread repudiation of pulpit utterances, when sentiments so opposed to truth and reason are a stock commodity thereof; unless the ministerial order desire to confine their appeals to "silly women," and to banish all cultivated intelligence from the churches, the sooner they cease to calumniate the Most High the better; they will discover moreover (to adopt their own sentiment), that if the heat of their ill-ventilated churches and schoolrooms be diminished, *the Lord will not take so many of the children*. Among other pieces of information which we received, in relation to infants was this, that "the covenant advantages of their baptism were difficult to define."

a difficulty, the solution of which, the minister judiciously left unattempted. "The nursery inmates of heaven" (with or without baptism) he was so good as to inform us, vastly outnumbered the adults, a statement, which at the present rate of slaughter, one would not desire to impugn.

A considerable number of ecclesiastics appear to be most in earnest when, like our imported sparrows, they are combating each others errors; our "reformed episcopalian," in common with the rest, waxed eloquent only when after erecting a high church card-castle, he proceeded with child-like delight, to batter it down. He sought more than once to catch the ear of the ladies with verses of poetry, which he evidently considered to be telling in a high degree, he manifested a striking disregard to the injunction of two apostles (1 Tim. ii, 9; 1 Peter, iii, 3,) whose valid successor he is supposed to be, in regard to the "wearing of gold," he has contracted the contagious disorder, involved by flourishing his sleeves, and was so good as to follow the example of his friend Leo, and other friends nearer home, in generously extending to us his *blessing*, at the conclusion of the service; it may be presumed that, in common with the gentlemen referred to, he concludes that "the less is blessed of the better," Heb. vii, 7. The most interesting portion of this, and it is to be feared, of many a pulpit deliverance, was expressed in the cheering words "in conclusion;" and one felt the more relieved in the present instance, because we were not tantalized with "lastly" or "finally," before we reached the conclusion. Upon the whole there is but too much reason to fear that what the Psalmist says of individual men is but too applicable to many professed Churches—"So soon as they are born, they go astray and speak lies."—Psalm lvi, 3.

TESTIMONY.

The President of the chartered Free-thought Association of the Dominion states that he has been repeatedly rebuked by

his associates, for telling the Editor of PULPIT CRITICISM, of the *good work* done by Dr. Wild in stimulating, by means of his pulpit travesties, the demand for infidel books. Dr. Wild is well aware that persons who have advanced a stage in infidelity beyond the Bond street stage, are unlikely to publish their names; but if it be any satisfaction to Dr. W. to possess the names of members of the Free-thought Association, who are satisfied that he is instrumental in increasing their number, he can have them by applying by letter to the Editor of PULPIT CRITICISM.

Dr. W., it is to be hoped, may also derive satisfaction from the testimony of that member of the Bond Street Church, who is largely interested in reducing its debt, to the effect that "the practice of swearing, which had obtained in a certain boot-factory, had been diminished, in consequence of some of the operatives of the factory frequenting the Bond Street Church."

It is well to be grateful for small mercies, and we will hope that the deacon's heart swelled with emotion, when the foregoing testimony was elicited from him at a recent meeting of representatives of the Congregational Union, whereat it was righteously decided that any approach to recognition of the Bond Street congregation is, under existing circumstances, impossible.

When one finds that Dr. Wild has announced from the pulpit, that he is the possessor of a book entitled "Sixteen crucified Saviours," and has offered from the pulpit to sell the book, one can hardly be surprised at certain of his hearers drawing conclusions unfavorable to his integrity as a professed preacher of the gospel.

JUDÆO-CHRISTIAN SARCO-PHAGI.

Certain sarcophagi, with inscriptions thereon, are among the treasures brought to light by the instrumentality of the Palestine exploration fund; they were discovered in a sepulchral cave in the Mount of

Offence ; several of the inscriptions, both Hebrew and Greek, are accompanied by crosses ; the cave in which the sarcophagi have been discovered belonging apparently to one of the earliest families which became followers of Christ ; the inscriptions furnish a series of names found in the Gospels, the interest of which is enhanced by their having been discovered close to the Bethany road, and near the site of the village of Bethany ; the names which occur are Jesus, Eleazar, (Lazarus,) Simon, and Martha.

TALMUDICAL LAWS.

UNDESIGNED COINCIDENCES.

Matt, xxiii, 5, 7.

“As a man is commanded to honor and fear his father, so he is bound to honor and fear his Rabbi more than his father ; for his father has been the means of bringing him into the life of this world, but his Rabbi, who teaches him wisdom, brings him to the life of the world to come.”—*Hilchoth Talmud*, Torah, c, 5.

“Thou must consider no honor greater than the honor of the Rabbi, and no fear greater than the fear of the Rabbi ; the wise men have said, the fear of thy Rabbi is as the fear of God.”—*Oral Law*.

“A wise woman once asked R. Eliezer, how it was that after the sin of the golden calf, they who were alike in transgression, did not all die the same death ? He replied, a woman’s wisdom is only for the distaff, as it is written, ‘All the women who were wise-hearted did spin with their hands.’”—(Ex. 35, 25.)—*Talmud Jona*, fol. 66, col. 2.

“A man’s duty with regard to the feast of Purim, is that he should eat meat and prepare a suitable feast, according to his means ; and drink wine, until he be drunk and fall asleep in his drunkenness.”—*Hilchoth Megillah*, c. ii. 15.

“A man is bound to get so drunk with wine at Purim as not to know the difference between Cursed is Haman, and Blessed is Mordecai.”—*Megillah*, fol. 7 col. 2.

CORRESPONDENCES.

DANIEL—“He shall speak great words against the Most High.”—vii. 25.

REVELATION—“Speaking great and blasphemous things.”—xiii. 5.

DANIEL—“He made war with the saints, and prevailed.”—vii. 21

REVELATION—“He made war with the saints, and overcame them.”—xiii. 7.

DANIEL—“They shall be given into his hand, till a time and times, and the dividing of time” (*i.e.* 1260 days).—vii. 25.

REVELATION—“Authority was given to him, to act forty and two months” (*i.e.* 1260 days).—xiii. 5.

ISAIAH—“And with the breath of his lips, shall He slay the Wicked One.”—xi. 4.

2 THESS.—“The Wicked One, whom the Lord shall consume by the breath of His mouth.”—ii. 8.

Is. x. 23.—“For a consummation, and that determined, the Lord Jehovah of hosts maketh.”

DAN. ix. 27.—“Even until the consummation, and that determined.”—See Heb.

“The King of Assyria” (Isa. x. 5 and xiv. 25), “the Prince who shall come” (Dan. ix. 26), and “the Desolater” (Dan ix. 27), are by the two passages above shown to be identical.