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Pulpit Criticism:

WITH

◀ ANSWERS TO OBJECTIONS TO THE BIBLE. ▶

A WEEKLY SHEET.

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THE BAPTIST CHURCH.

JARVIS STREET.

Any one who may happen to have paid sufficient attention to the principles and ways of Christendom in the present era, would perceive, on entering the church above-named, that the guiding spirits of that institution have been actuated by principles similar to those which have characterized professing Christianity, from the time that it became corrupt; in other words, that the senses have been appealed to, in everything connected with the church, as much, though in a different fashion, as they have been for many centuries, by the older churches. In this Exhibition time, one may be pardoned for suggesting that if the Jarvis Street Church were to seek a prize for the greatest parade of "the pomps and vanities of this wicked world," it would apparently have as fair a chance of success as most others of the order. Upon such an exterior it was sought to graft a tone of godliness and orthodoxy which appeared to the writer to be little in har-

mony with his surroundings. The service was conducted by the Rev. Dr. Castle, and was intended to be of a missionary character; it is probably well for "the heathen" for whose benefit pecuniary aid (and prayer) was sought on this occasion, that they are unlikely to obtain their impressions of Christianity by putting in an appearance at the Jarvis Street Conventicle. The organ and choir constitute two of the popular attractions of the place, and the organist is permitted to advertise his skill by "recital" on the instrument while the congregation is assembling; in addition to that substantial reward which he receives, in common with the piper of the pulpit, he, on the occasion in question, was made the recipient of an oleaginous compliment from that rostrum—not the first of its kind probably, which had emanated from the same lubricating piper—The pulpit-piper was dilating on the power of the Lord, not only to effect

his miracles, but to communicate miraculous power to others, when he seized the opportunity to refer to the "soul-stirring strains" which had reached him from a set of pipes external to his own; he observed that charming as was the skill of him "who swept the key-board below him," (and he might have added, and calculated to pay as an investment) yet the organist lacked the power of immediately communicating his accomplishment to the envious crowd of feathered ladies who were assembled in that theatre Ecclesiastical. That which might have been the substantial part of the service, consisted in the fortieth chapter of Isaiah, which as usual, was read as if no exposition of it were needed, and there *are* circumstances in which, owing to the lack of apprehension, on the part of those who minister, any attempt at exposition is better omitted; such has been the defence set up by a prominent officer in the Presbyterian Church, in conversation with the writer, for the discouragement, if not the prohibition, of any public exposition of Scripture, in that branch of the Church; we venture to conclude that it is time the ministers were sufficiently qualified for their position, to undertake the fearless exposition of the portions they read, but the canny rulers of assemblies, etc., are doubtless aware that such a course as that we advocate, would disturb that slumber of combined ignorance and indifference which might be attended with inconvenient results. It was satisfactory to perceive that Dr. Castle was so far conscious of the desirability of rendering the selected portion intelligible, as, instead of reading ver. 9 from the text, to read, at least in part, from the margin, and consequently to approximate the native beauty of the passage;—"O thou who tellest good tidings to Zion, get thee up into the high mountain; (a) O thou who tellest good tidings to

(a) This might be applied primarily to the Lord's position as recorded in Matt. v. i.

Jerusalem, lift up thy voice against the strong (one), (b) lift it up, be not afraid; proclaim to the cities of Judah, 'Behold (it is) your God.'" The reading of this passage in the margin is—"Proclaim to the cities of the house of Judah, the kingdom of your God is revealed." Persons unacquainted with Hebrew would scarcely expect that the tenth verse relates the progress of Jehovah Jesus, and they who were assembled in Jarvis Street were not enlightened on this subject; neither did they learn that "his reward is (declared to be) with him, and his *recompense* before him." In order to understand the force and beauty of the portion read on this occasion, it is necessary to remember that the division of Scripture into chapters, is of man's devising; any one who may refer to the sixth and seventh verses of the previous chapter, will perceive that this portion stands in the most intimate and 'comforting' relation to the terrible denunciation of those verses; the times of the Gentiles, beginning with the Babylonish captivity, and extending as they have done, from that period to the present, are in this fortieth chapter, regarded as having terminated, and the kingdom of the rejected Messiah, as about to be established, hence the sublime salutation—"Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God; speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her, that her appointed time is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned; for she hath received at Jehovah's hand, double for all her sins." The third verse, "The voice of him who crieth in the wilderness," etc., is remarkable on account of it being quoted by all the Evangelists, in relation to John the Baptist, and is also remarkable on account of that widely extended

(b) When the strong one armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace, but when he who is stronger than he shall come on him, and overcome him, he taketh from him his complete armour, etc., Luke xi, 21, 22.

misapprehension of it, and of its immediate context, which has been disseminated from the days of the Puritans; that the context itself indicates a wider scope for its application, is manifest, unless such persons as Dr. Castle can demonstrate that the combined operation of such institutions as Jarvis Street Church and McMaster's Hall are operating so effectually on Ontarian society that "every valley (in the moral world is being 'exalted' by their means), and every mountain and hill is being laid low;" for our part, we must confess to the conviction that neither "the soul-stirring strains" of the piper below the pulpit, nor the forced and spurious eloquence of the piper above, will exercise any perceptible influence in rendering "the crooked places (of this world) straight," or the "rough places plain;" that this is the case, and that the passage extends, in its bearing, to a yet future period, is manifest from the former part of the fifth verse, which is omitted by Luke (ch. iii. 5) because he knew he was not writing of a time when "*The glory of the Lord should be revealed.*" That a second preparation of the way of the Lord is as plainly declared as words can communicate it, will be evident by reference to Mal. iii. 1, where we read that "The Lord (Jesus) whom ye seek, shall *suddenly* come to his temple, even the angel of the covenant, whom ye (Israelites) delight in." Did the Lord *suddenly come*, on his first presentation in the temple? Was "every valley exalted" by his coming? Was there any reason to say, "But who may abide the day of his coming?" &c., Mal. iii. 2. *One of the results* of his coming is that "he will purify the sons of Levi," the priests, who, from the day this was indited, to the present, have always been most in need of purification. It is observable that the prophet Malachi states, in close connexion with the foregoing declaration, that Jerusalem, and the house of Judah are to be presented as an offer-

ing to Jehovah; and as Dr. Castle and the like of him tell us that Jerusalem is the Church, we may presume that Jarvis St. Church, Cook's, which is placarded as "for sale," and that styled Old St. Andrew's, when its mortgage is paid off, *with the "houses of Judah" which they severally contain*, will all be presented as offerings to Jehovah! Some aid may be obtained from the Apostle Peter, in the understanding of that portion of the chapter which he cites (1 Pet. i. 24, 25); in contrast with the perishable flesh, which "is as grass," he observes that "*The Word of the Lord endureth for ever.* And this is *the Word*, which by the gospel is preached to you;" the same eternal person, as the writer apprehends, of whom the Apostle John writes, when he declares that "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." This by connecting it with Is. xl. 8, "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but *the Word of our God shall stand for ever,*" appears to throw a reflex light on that singular prophetic conversation between John the Baptist and the Lord Jesus, which extends from the sixth to the eighth verse. Prophecy is full of epitomes, and this chapter of Isaiah furnishes several illustrations of the fact; a fact the more intelligible when one reflects that it is dictated by one, with whom the remote future is as the present. Of cases of studied enumeration of sentences in this chapter, we have several instances, *eight* of them in vs. 10 and 11. The order of creation is observed in the first three sentences of the twelfth verse, and we have *twelve* sentences extending from v. 12 to 14. "Rectitude" should be substituted for "judgment" in v. 14, *seven* more sentences occur in vs. 15 to 17. If v. 22 be read as follows, it will become intelligible,—"He who sitteth over the circle of the earth, (and the inhabitants thereof are as locusts),* who stretcheth

* So named as hiding the sun.

out the heavens, &c.;" "rulers" should supersede "judges" in v. 23. *Eight* sentences occur in vs. 24 and 25, and another group of *eight* in vs. 30 and 31. The latter part of v. 27 should be read thus,— "my manner of life is hidden from Jehovah, and my rectitude is overlooked by my God." It only remains to add that "they who wait for Jehovah"—gives an alternative thought to the concluding verse of the chapter. We have enlarged on this portion of Scripture to the neglect of the pulpit essay; we must leave it to the ministerial order, (and their supporters) to protract their essays to the neglect of the Scriptures.

The sermon was based on John xiv, 12. "Verily, verily, I say to you, He who believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do, because I go to my Father." After observing that some restrict this promise to the times of the Apostles, Dr. C. proceeded to comment on the greater works accomplished in their day, than those wrought by the Lord himself, such as those resulting from "the shadow of Peter passing by," etc., and he dwelt at length on the conversion of the unchanged as being more marvellous than any miracle wrought by the Lord in person; he confounded, as he might be expected to do, the mission of the twelve and of the seventy—who were specially cautioned not to proclaim the earthly kingdom to Gentiles—with "spiritual results," talked about "the sermon on the mount"—which does not

happen to be a sermon—as "the greatest sermon" and relieved himself of much melancholy moonshine of the aforementioned order; the world, he correctly observed, has yet to see what is to be accomplished by such pipings as his own, and by the increasing of such institutions as that of McMaster Hall. "The earth is to be filled with the knowledge of the Lord," by means of these agencies, etc., etc. Tested by that sensitive metre, the treasurer's account, there would not appear to be much faith in all this, as we heard of a deficit of \$4,500, and of \$1,250 less having been subscribed this year than in the previous year, notwithstanding we are enjoying a season of unwonted prosperity.

ENCOURAGEMENT TO MINISTERS, AND TO OTHERS "WHO PROFESS AND CALL THEMSELVES CHRISTIANS."

It is related of a certain Swedish princess that she concluded that the best use she could make of her diamonds was to convert them into money, and hand the proceeds of their sale to an hospital in which she took a special interest; when subsequently the princess visited the hospital the gratitude of one of the patients expressed itself in tears, and the royal visitant, on recognizing them, exclaimed, "now I see my diamonds again!" Go, ye would be guides to heaven, to Sweden, if need be, and learn of this exemplary lady.

MEDICAL CRITICISM, by the same Author. sold at Hawkins & Co.'s, 67 Yonge Street. Price, 50 Cents.