

Pulpit Criticism.

A WEEKLY SHEET.

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ST. PHILIP'S CHURCH,

ST. PATRICK STREET.

That weekly masquerade which, from the earliest ages, has consisted in no inconsiderable section of the rogues and vagabonds of civilized communities "bowing the head like a bulrush" in Christian Churches, is happily by no means universal, and a visit to the little Church of St. Philip gladdened the heart of the writer, by illustrating the fact. He wended his way thither on the 21st instant, about half and hour before the service commenced. The unusually early hour at which the congregation began to assemble, was the first circumstance that struck him as remarkable, and the second was the manifest sincerity of the worship, as evidenced by the generality of the responses, and the demeanour of the majority of the congregation; he had no difficulty in tracing these circumstances to the healthy influence of the pastor, and it may be well if others should be led to reflect how greatly they may influence for good, or for evil, those toward whom they occupy the relation of pastor. The simple and unobjectionable mode of providing for the financial needs of this church meets one's gaze in the porch: this will be gathered from the

following quotation—"Required per Sunday, \$48.00, offertory last Sunday, \$50.00, deficiency to date, \$52.00." With regard to the service, as a whole, it may be permissible to remark, in the interest of the Episcopal Church, that the sooner it can disenthral itself from the liturgical results of state bondage, the better it will be for its chances of commending itself to the intelligent adhesion of the people; if, for instance, the several ministers and congregations had the option of reciting one, instead of two creeds during the morning service, of presenting the Lord's prayer once, instead of thrice, or of omitting the whole, according to their measure of light, something would be gained in the direction of Biblical intelligence. The hymns of most of the Churches afford lamentable proof of lack of Biblical intelligence on the part of their compilers, and they necessarily perpetuate the ignorance they indicate; "the Church hymnal," accredited though it be by the impress of that ornamental extinguisher, the mitre forms no exception to the rule; the rhapsody on the subject of the Lord's day, numbered 137 in the book, is a composition replete

with error; such evidence of the mental condition of "a committee appointed by the Bishop of Montreal to compile the book," is apt to impress one with the urgent need there is of such gentlemen occupying themselves otherwise than with disputes as to the respective merits or demerits of high and low churchism. The service at the above named church was conducted by the Rev. J. S. Stone, and as it is not the writer's intention to criticize *that*, he will content himself with remarking that it may be well it did not devolve on him to cross-examine the esteemed incumbent, when, in connexion with an exhortation to bring as many children as possible to "baptism," he informed us that "*Christ had commanded*" such a proceeding. Before commenting on the sermon, it may be desirable to invite attention to the circumstance that the congregations are few which do not combine the worship of their Maker with the transgression of his laws, in the same act; and the deep interest the writer took in everything connected with the church of St. Philip need not prevent him remarking that the congregation was inhaling the air of an unventilated box throughout the service, although a means of ventilation was at hand, owing to the windows in the roof admitting of being opened. It would be well if Christians would remember that to obey God's natural laws is as filial an act, as is the endeavour to "honour their father and mother," etc., and to disobey them is to entail on themselves the penal consequences of their transgression, consequences which are too often attributed by pastors and people to the arbitrary decree of the Almighty. A faint, on the part of one of the congregations at St. Philip's, was one of the consequences of the condition of the atmosphere above indicated. The sermon was taken from 1 Pet. v. 10.—"But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered awhile, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you." The spirit in which it was delivered, may be gathered from the

prayer which preceded it, which is as follows:—"O Almighty God, giver of all grace, pour down thy Holy Spirit upon us, and grant that under His gracious influences we may profitably hear thy word expounded, and in our daily lives may bring the same to good effect. Give thy blessing to him who speaks, and to those who hear, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen." The sermon was based on the assumption that it was addressed to persons occupying a similar relation to the Almighty, to that occupied by those to whom the Apostle Peter addressed his epistle; and it was commenced with the remark that "there are mountain heights in God's word, as well as in the world of nature. Our text is one of them." The preacher then proceeded to amplify the several items of the selected passage, and reminded the believing section of his hearers, that they were as plants in the garden of God, who needed all the fructifying influences which the Most High has to bestow, in order to develop the manifold graces of the Christian life, and he encouraged them by enforcing the verity that in so far as they loved God, it was because "He first loved them;" he dilated on some of the lovely aspects of nature, as illustrative of the glory of God, and he *might have quoted* the nineteenth Psalm, in furtherance of this, which if permitted to reach us in its pristine beauty, would be recited thus: "The heavens are telling the glory of God; the firmament displaying the work of his hands; day unto day welleth forth speech, and night unto night breatheth out knowledge. (There is) no speech nor language without their voice being understood. Their *line* (sound of a musical chord) is gone forth through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world," etc. The reverend gentleman observed that the scattering worlds through space involved no sacrifice on the part of the Almighty, but the "not sparing his son, but freely giving him up for us all," (mysterious as it confessedly is,) involved a sacrifice, one bearing of which, in regard to ourselves, may teach us the estimate put

upon us, on high. In the preacher's endeavour to exalt to the utmost the claims of the Lord Jesus on our affections, as the only mediator between God and man, he also sought to bring us into intimate relation with the friend of the fallen, by saying "If we are sorrowing beneath some heavy cross," it is Christ who says "Let not your hearts be troubled;" if we are hesitating as to some line of duty, it is Christ who says "Follow me." If we are weary of life, and its bitter experiences, Christ says "Come to me, and I will give you rest." It is this kind of preaching from one human heart to another, that always has been instrumental in breaking down the natural barriers, and doubtless will be to the end. After dwelling at some length on the inevitable cross-bearing, which is the heritage of christians, Mr. S. observed "just as exposure to storm, cold, and hardship inures the inhabitants of the north, so tribulation establishes the christian and strengthens him for his journey;" etc. It may suffice to observe 'in conclusion,' that the writer would be glad to see the incumbent of St. Philip's throw away the crutches of a written sermon, and preach from notes, if necessary; he would also rejoice, if instead of *blessing* his flock, at the termination of the service, which he lacks the power to do, he and they may participate in the blessing of that white-robed priest, who is "a priest for-ever, after the order of Melchizedek." That the members of this little Church are not merely "hearers of the word" is manifest from a perusal of their annual report. This document states that the various receipts through the 'offertory,' for the year ending the 31st of March last, amounted to \$2424.12. From the same source one learns of the existence of a 'young people's association, in connexion with the church, and of the 'untiring efforts' of the same in relation to its welfare; of a coal association, and of a fund for the poor, the average receipts of which for fifteen Sundays exceeded \$5.87 per Sunday; of a special collection for a distressed family, amounting to \$21.17; of a North-

West Mission Fund which absorbed \$31.81, and of \$45.21 being raised for the St. Philip's Church Mission Fund. One may hope that this sum will be expended in relation to *the heathen* of Toronto, whose number according to the daily experience of the editor of 'Pulpit Criticism,' may be said to be legion. Possibly the suggestion may not be inopportune, at this juncture, that the most important undertaking on which the ministers, and sincere Christians, clerical or lay, could embark, would be the arranging a series of lectures on the evidences of Christianity.

SUGGESTION.

The temerity on the part of Bishop Sweatman, which led his lordship to draw a parallel between his own manipulation of the artificial flowers on the heads of superstitious young ladies, and the act of the patriarch Jacob, in blessing his grandchildren, may be said to have resulted felicitously, inasmuch as it has suggested the desirability of uniting the energies of two professions, for their mutual benefit. In view of the circumstance of a quarterly batch of newly-fledged and briefless barristers, being sent forth from Osgoode Hall, it would doubtless be judicious on the part of the Bishop, when pleading at the bar of public opinion in future, to retain counsel; and as it is a tradition of the legal profession to disregard the desperateness of any case they may defend, there can be no doubt that any number of these professional combatants will be forthcoming at the beck of the Bishop; as little can one doubt that torrents of rhetoric, quickened, may be, by visions of vestal virgins bending before the Bishop, will be poured forth in defence of a fiction, rendered venerable by the lapse of fifteen centuries, in defence of Jacob's blessing *under the sign of the cross*, and of vested interests, etc. Who can tell but this prospective union of the professions may result in *the conversion* of some scores of infidel barristers in this city to the ranks of bulrush worshippers?

KURN SARTABEH.

A MOUNTAIN NEAR JERICHO.

"If, in the vast plain of Jericho, you raise your eyes northward, you will see the horizon partly closed in the distance by a long chain of blue hills, above which rises a conical peak known as Kurn Sartabeh. This peak, which is seen from a great distance, and which appears to command all the low ground at its feet, stands like a bastion of the western chain."

"Signals of fire, serving to announce the new moon, were made from the Mount of Olives to Sartabeh, from Sartabeh to Gerufna, from Gerufna to Khoran, from Khoran to Beth Baltin."—*Talmud*.

Joshua v. 13-15. "And Joshua was at Jericho, and he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold there stood a man before him with his sword drawn in his hand; and Joshua went towards him and said to him 'Art thou for us or for our adversaries?' and he said, 'Nay, but as captain of the host (SARSABA) of the Lord, and now I am coming towards thee.' And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and saith unto him, 'What saith my Lord to his servant?' And the captain of the Lord's host said to Joshua, 'Loose thy shoe from off thy foot, for the place whereon thou standest is holy,' and Joshua did so."

The Hebrew word Sarsaba signifies *chief of the army*, and is rendered in the Septuagint by a corresponding word. This etymological coincidence appears to indicate an intimate relation between the vision and the mountain.

The Almighty has seen fit to connect his manifestations of himself with mountains from age to age, and it is remarkable that Joshua, in the instance above cited, should have been addressed by him in terms so similar to those addressed to Moses on Mount Horeb. Ex. iii. 5. Jerusalem, the *future* seat of government for the world, is spoken of by Daniel (chap. ix. 16), as "thy holy mountain," and by Zechariah (chap. viii. 3), "*the mountain of the Lord of hosts*, is a sacred mountain." When the same prophet foretells "the gathering of all nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the going forth of the Lord (Jesus) to fight against those nations," he adds "and his feet shall stand in that day *on the Mount of Olives*, which is before Jerusalem on the east," etc.—From *M. Clermont-Ganneau's Letters from Jerusalem*.

Ex. i. 22. 'This was Satan's power; by means of death, he sought to frustrate the purpose of God. It has ever been thus, as witness the case of Abel, in Gen. iv., that of Joseph, in Gen. xxxvii., of the 'seed royal,' in 2 Chron. xxii., the act of Herod, in Matt. ii., and the death of Christ, in Matt. xxvii.'

'The man whom God will pre-eminently use, must be endowed with such qualifications as can alone be found in the deep and hallowed retirement of the Lord's presence; such were Moses at Horeb, Elijah at Cherith, Ezekiel at Chebar, Paul in Arabia, and John in Patmos. The time John spent in private was nearly ten times as long as that he spent in public.'