

Pulpit Criticism:

WITH

ANSWERS TO OBJECTIONS TO THE BIBLE.

A WEEKLY SHEET.

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ST. PAUL'S CHURCH.

POWER STREET.

The pulpit of this Church was occupied by the Reverend Father Shean, on the 28th ult. Shakespeare reminded us of the desirability of finding "sermons in stones," but that we should ever find stones in sermons—that when we should "ask for bread," the ministerial order should deliver us "a stone," was not dream't of in the philosophy of our great dramatist. Although the editor has listened, "marked, learned," and endeavoured "inwardly to digest" the particular stone to which he bent his attention on the morning of the 28th, it is to be feared that he left the church of St. Paul a confirmed dyspeptic. He is glad, however, to be able to say that what are technically styled "the epistle" and "gospel," were read in English from the pulpit; the former was taken from Acts ii. 1-11, the latter from John xiv. 23-31.

The subject of the Pentecostal descent, as recorded in "the gospel for the day," was that which was supposed to be the

subject of the sermon. The Reverend Father stated that the Jews celebrate the giving of the law on the day of Pentecost, the day on which the foundation of the Church was laid; that the Apostles on that day became new men; fifty days previously they had fled, in view of danger; from that day forward they were strengthened and emboldened to preach Christ crucified. The preacher proceeded to inform us that the faithful could still receive the Holy Ghost if in a state of grace; that they who had discharged certain duties prescribed by the priests, and had partaken of the holy eucharist would be recipients of this heavenly gift, and all this in addition to what they had been supposed to receive in baptism, which was said to have been regeneration, or purification from original and actual sin. (The writer gathered from this statement that the merits of "infant baptism," are said to be increasing.) We were informed that the Divine person whose descent was cele-

brated on this day, had also come through the sacrament of penance, so that, as probably the Reverend Father himself would admit, there must have been some remarkable developments in the dealings of God with man, since the Pentecost "fully came," as recorded in the second chapter of the Acts, if these things be indeed so. We were told that this heavenly visitant occupied a similar relation to the Church, to that which a captain holds towards his ship, guiding her through heresies, etc., etc., that her ministers received graces and gifts on this day, wherewith to guide the faithful, etc. The reverend gentleman concluded by kindly expressing his desire that we might be spiritually enriched through this priestly medium.

The prominence given by the Church of Rome to the celebration of "the mass," in her public worship, affords the strongest historical confirmation of the correctness of the view, as to what ought to be the leading feature of Christian worship, expressed in No. 14 of this publication, in an article entitled "No-pulpit Criticism."

"EARNESTLY CONTEND FOR THE FAITH WHICH WAS ONCE DELIVERED TO THE SAINTS."—*Jude* 3.

In the course of the editor's somewhat recent experience, he has met with a former deacon of a Baptist church, and a former superintendent of a Sunday School, in a state of utter unbelief; indeed, this condition of mind, or that of entire indifference to the claims of the Bible, on the part of the vast majority of the citizens of Toronto, has led him to devote one page, or more, when practicable, of this little sheet, to the admission of objections to portions of the Bible, which will be answered in the same number, but as this will probably involve a considerable addition to the literary labour connected with the paper, he will exercise his discretion as to the selection of any such objections, and as to the time when he may endeavour to answer them. One objection raised by

the former deacon above referred to, was "that God commanded David to number Israel, and then slew seventy thousand because they had been numbered;" the margin at the passage cited, 2 Sam. xxiv. 1-15, indicates that it was Satan who *persuaded* David, and not the Almighty; and the text of the corresponding passage in 1 Chron. xxi. 1., embodies *the name* of Satan. That David himself anticipated objectors, on the score of the supposed injustice of this judicial punishment, is manifest from his own plea—"Lo, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly; but these sheep, what have they done? Let thine hand, I pray thee, be against me, and against my father's house." Ver. 17. Jehovah, who "gives no account of any of his matters," (or "answereth not," marg. Job. xxxiii. 13.,) did not reply to this inquiry, but we gather both from the first, and from the concluding verse of the chapter, that "the anger of Jehovah was kindled against Israel;" they who have studied scripture reverently and adequately, will be prepared to expect that a narrative of this character constitutes a connecting link with events which preceded it, and with others which will follow it; such persons will have observed "that the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite" is on the same site as that of Abraham's sacrifice, (see Gen. xxii. 2, 14, and 2 Chron. iii. 1,) and if Gen. xxii. 14, be read as follows, the connexion between these incidents and the subsequent erection of Solomon's temple on the same spot will be manifest—"And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah Jireh, because it shall be said, there is a day in which Jehovah shall be *seen* in the mount." This passage necessarily connects itself with 1 Kgs. ix. 3, "I have hallowed this house, which thou hast built, to place my *name** there for ever; and my eyes and my heart shall be there perpetually." The threshing-floor of Araunah is probably typical of that future action of the

*A name of Christ, as demonstrable from Philo.

Lord Jesus, which is described by John the Baptist—"Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor." (Mat. iii. 12.) No one will venture to affirm that any action answering to the foregoing declaration, has taken place as yet. Micah iv. 12, and Rev. xiv. 15, predict judgment as about to ensue in that region. The meaning of the names of the places at which the numbering and subsequently the slaughter took place, would appear to confirm the view above indicated, unless any resolute objector will avail himself of the convenient plea of "a coincidence." The numbering commenced at *Dan*, which means "*Judgment*;" the enumerators pass thence over *Jordan*, "*the river of judgment*," and the pestilence is stayed at the threshing-floor of an inhabitant of *Jebus*, "*a place trodden down*;" this appears to be a forecasting of that "*treading the wine press alone*" of which we read in Is. lxiii. 3, and in Rev. xiv. 19, 20, and xix. 15. The Lord Jesus when he refers to the "days of Noe," and "the days of Lot" respectively, (Matt. xxiv. 37, 39, and Luke xvii. 26-29,) teaches us to read the future in the past. With regard to the foregoing, it may be well, in conclusion, to echo the words of the Apostle Paul, *as he wrote them*—"What if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faithfulness of God without effect?" Rom. iii. 3.

The apostate Superintendent of a Sunday school appeared to think that he presented an insuperable objection, when he pointed to Matt. ii. 15., as an alleged fulfilment of Hos. xi. 1. To suppose that it was not a fulfilment of the prophecy is to assume that the evangelist, and they whom he addressed were so utterly ignorant as to be unable or unlikely to look from the first to the second verse of the passage quoted, an assumption on the part of the objector, which appears to involve his unacquaintance with the fact that the people of Israel jealously guarded every word of

their Scriptures, and must have been as well acquainted with the second as with the first verse of the passage quoted; they would moreover have been but too glad to repudiate the citation as applying to *the Messiah*, because *with them* the question was whether or not the Lord Jesus were he. When it is apprehended that the purpose of God has always been to send the Messiah, and that for reasons which the Almighty has not deigned to explain, "it behoved the Messiah to suffer" (Luke xxiv. 46.), it does not appear very extraordinary that this under-current-truth should pervade the whole Bible, and that like some terrestrial currents, it should at times come to the surface, and then again sink out of sight. In the adjoining chapter of Hosea (x. 1.) we have a somewhat similar thought presented—"Israel is an empty vine, he bringeth forth fruit to himself;" it is worthy of note that in the eightieth Psalm, this "vine out of Egypt," and its reverses being the subject of it, when the desolate condition of "the vine" is bewailed, "it is burned with fire, it is cut down" (ver. 16), the only hope of the suppliant is in "the true vine" (John xv. 1., etc.), "Let thy hand be *on the man of thy right hand*, on *the Son of Man* whom thou madest strong for thyself." Psalm lxxx. 17. As it is with ourselves, in regard to any object of our affections, so it is with Him who made us; *we* delight in speaking of those we love, and the Almighty, from one end of the Bible to the other, (in ways not always visible to un instructed eyes,) has shown his delight in the Son of his love. "*The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*" 1 Cor. ii. 14.

EXTRA PULPIT CRITICISM.

There can be none, one may presume, but will sympathise with Mr. O'Brien, in his persistent efforts to minister to the bodies and souls of the inmates of the

* Clearly an act of judgment.

General Hospital. There will be some, however, if they listen to his religious ministrations, disposed to deprecate his conveying *the infection* of certain pulpits with regard to the endlessness of suffering, to those who are realizing that they come in for a considerable share of it on this side the grave. Such persons will be apt to ask this professional reasoner how he reconciles such a line of teaching with the fundamental fact, which finds expression in the entrance-hall of the Hospital, that GOD IS LOVE; they may also remind this gentleman that the words of Matthew (ch. xxv. 46.) rendered "everlasting punishment," are reducible to "age-lasting pruning;" that as this grave subject drives us to the Greek, it is well to know that such an authority as Bagster contradicts himself in various ways thereon. In his Greek and English Lexicon to the New Testament, he states that while *aion* relates to a period of "*finite or infinite duration*," *aionios* describes "*an unlimited period*;" that the branch is of a different nature to the tree consequently. In his analytical Greek Lexicon, *aion* is said to express "*illimitable*" duration, *aionios*, on the contrary, is said to be "*indeterminate*" as to duration, "*eternal*," "*everlasting*." So that we have here, in the highest authority, simply heaps of contradiction. It behoves ordinary mortals, therefore, to fall back on such declarations as that respecting the loving character of the Almighty, and on the further promise that "when all things shall be subdued to him, then shall the Son also himself be subject to him who put all things under him, that God may be all in all." 1 Cor. xv. 28.

PRACTICAL PHILOSOPHY.

A gentleman who, although he occupies a pulpit in the neighbourhood of this city, believes it is "more blessed to give than to receive," has observed that when

the collection plate has been allowed to go round, he has seen first one and then another member of certain poor families come to church, bringing a child with him or her, but when the plate *ceased to go round*, and a box was placed by the door, into which the congregation dropped their money or not, according to their convenience, the number of members of the family who accompanied the child increased. If ministers were to aim at the *hearts* of the people, instead of at their pockets, they could afford to be less solicitous on the subject of sending round the plate.

TRUANT SCHOOL.

It is with unmixed satisfaction that we hear of the organization of a truant school for parsons; a school wherein any of the order who may happen to cherish a weakness for flourishing bad Latin, and French in the pulpit, may have their crudities corrected. Some of us may, under such circumstances, be spared the infliction of listening to *ekke homo*, and *ekke Deus*; be spared the regret also that the late bishop was so hard up for candidates for ordination, as not to have said *ekke portam* (behold the door), when a certain truant Methodist sought Episcopal orders at his hands, in preference to commercial.

It is said of Pergamos, that it was more filled with idols than any other city of Asia, and a celebrated temple of Esculapius was erected there, where serpents were kept at the public expense; the cures wrought here, were by Celsus compared to those of our Lord. Into Pergamos, moreover, the adoration of the Roman emperor was first introduced (Tacit. iv. 55). Perhaps these circumstances may account for the reiterated statement that "Satan's throne" was at Pergamos. (Rev. ii. 13.)