

# Pulpit Criticism.

A WEEKLY SHEET.

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A human skeleton, about as faithfully represents the aspect of a healthy man, as do the grim, gaunt, traditional and unintelligent presentations of Biblical truths, which prevail in this nineteenth century, represent the verities of the Bible. The transcendent sublimity of the undertaking on the part of the king of the universe, to "empty himself" (Phil. ii. 7, Gr.), of the glory which he had with the Father, to "take on him the form of a slave, and be made in the likeness of men," and this, "to accomplish a decease" rendered necessary in order to meet the governmental requirements of the courts above, and with a view to a limitless reign of righteousness, and beneficence on earth; if heard of at all, in those commercial institutions, the churches of the day, is mentioned only to be assailed: such ideas are not dream't of in the philosophy of average pulpits. Given, the corrupt practices of eighteen centuries, and erroneous teaching is one of the consequences; we will, however, resume the consideration of the parable, to which attention was invited at the above named Church, on the 29<sup>th</sup> ult. They who have read the previous number of the "CRITICISM," will remember that we stopped in the attempted exposition of the parable of the hidden treasure, at that juncture whereat the treasure had been hidden; we will now pass to the period which was transpiring at the time the parable was delivered, or was at that time future; There has never been but one man who could hide a treasure, and be blameless. So soon as Jesus had found the treasure, John the Baptist and the twelve are severally sent forth to proclaim "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven hath drawn near," (Matt. iii. 2, and x. 7.) But Israel refused to believe and repent; the treasure of the kingdom, therefore, though found, and proclaimed, is covered up again; it could not be displayed in the midst of unbelief. The turning point in the narrative which records this most momentous event will be found in Matt. xii. 28. where we read, "But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come to you;" immediately afterwards follows the intimation, that it will be necessary to "bind the strong man," before proceeding to "spoil his house;" then (v. 31) we have the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost recorded, and subsequently (v. 38) the demand for

"a sign," a demand met by the Lord with a portent of death and resurrection (vs. 40, 41); this is followed by the prediction that the "unclean spirit" of Jewish unbelief will seek rest and find none (v. 43), will "return to his house, will find it empty, and swept, and furnished, will take with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and the last state of that man will be worse than the first;" "Even so shall it be to this wicked (race or) generation." From that time forth the Lord "opened his mouth in parables;" this change in the character of the Messiah's teaching led to the enquiry "Why speakest thou to them in parables?" an enquiry which elicited the response "because it is given to you to know the mysteries (secrets) of the kingdom of heaven," (Ch. xiii, 11.) From that period onward we have the material kingdom deferred, (a glimpse of the glories of which is given to three of the disciples, Matt. xvi. 28; xvii. 2), and the church, the believing body, which had been "kept secret from the foundation of the world" introduced, Matt. xvi. 18, 19. Unbelief on man's part, resulted in secrecy on the part of the Holy One—"then charged He his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus, the Messiah." "As the act of opening and producing the treasure would have been the day of Jerusalem's glory, and superiority to every foe, so is the day of its hiding, a time of sorrow, humiliation, and down-treading to Jerusalem and Judea. The discoverer of the treasure could not cover it up again without tears, "And when He was come near, He beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong to thy peace; but now now they are hidden from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side; and they shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy

\* Psalm lxi. 25. Their palace shall be desolate. Matt. xxiii. 38. Behold your house is left to you desolate.

children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of the of thy visitation." Luke xix. 41-44. The time of the treading down of Jerusalem is also the time of the kingdom in mystery, or of the treasure hidden; for Jerusalem is "the city of the great king," its depressed condition therefore argues that the kingdom is not come, that the treasure continues hidden." The glory of the Messiah, and that of Jerusalem are inseparable, as hosts of such passages as the following indicate,—“For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness hereof shine forth as brightness, and the deliverance thereof as a torch that burneth.” Isa. lxii. 1. Jerusalem in unbelief cannot be the metropolis of the world; it must yet be trodden down by the Gentiles, under the reign of the false Messiah, as certainly as they will be ruled beneath the sceptre of the true. God purposes making "a covenant of peace" with Judah, but such a covenant could not be fulfilled at Christ's first coming, for the Jews rejected him; by-and-bye "they shall look on him whom they have pierced, and shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness, as one who is in bitterness for his firstborn." Zech. xii. 10.\* In that day there will be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness." Zech. xiii. 1. The hidden purpose of God in purchasing the world through the redemption of Christ, and postponing the period of Israel's glory confounded the Jews; they looked for the fulfilment of such predictions as "Arise, be enlightened for thy light cometh, for the glory of Jehovah is risen on thee . . . and the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising," etc., Isa. lx. 1, 3, but inasmuch as they rejected the Sun, the Lord says, "Yet a little while is the light

\* It is worthy of note that Jeremiah (ch. vi. 26), and Amos (ch. viii. 10), each refer to "the only son."

with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come on you." Jno. xii. 35. They "trusted that it had been he who should have *redeemed Israel*," Luke xxiv. 21, and so he did, but the purpose of God extends further, and while Israel is for the present cut off, a "wild olive branch" is brought in; these facts will be best expressed in Biblical words.—"Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, *because they repented not*. Woe to thee Chorazin! Woe to thee Bethsaida! . . . At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, *because Thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to babes*." Matt. xli. 20, 21, 25. As the kingdom remains to this day unmanifested, so is it with the *life* wherewith believers in Christ will participate in the kingdom. "Our *life is hidden* with Christ, in God." Col. iii. 3. To resume the direct consideration of the parable—"for joy thereof (on finding the treasure) he goeth back." A transient flash from the glory of the treasure once gave joy both to the Lord and to the seventy. He had sent them forth with power against demons and diseases, "and the seventy returned again *with joy*, saying, Lord, even the demons are subject to us through Thy name; and He said to them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. . . . In that hour *Jesus rejoiced in spirit* and said, I thank Thee O Father," etc., Luke x. 17, 18, 21. The *joy* is more especially that of the discoverer of the treasure, hence another parable describes the time of the kingdom, as that of the Master's *joy*, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the *joy* of thy Lord." Matt. xxv. 21, . . . 23. Again, we read (Heb. xii. 2.) that it was "for *the joy* that was set before him, that the Lord endured the cross, despising the shame." The next act described in the parable is that "He goeth back;" the word denotes that *He was away from home, and returned to his home again*; it is the expression that is used almost without exception, in describing the departure of the

Lord from the earth. When the Jews rejected His claims as the Messiah, Jesus exhibited himself in His death as the Saviour of the world. This is the point of time at which the parable of the hidden treasure presents him, as the present tenses used henceforward prove. He has covered up the treasure, He is about to return to the Father; the unbelief of the Jews which resulted in the concealment of the treasure, resulted also in the Lord's leaving earth for heaven. "This is *the heir*; come, *let us kill him*, and the inheritance shall be ours." The first announcement of the Lord's return to the Father, is made after the Jews seek to slay him. "Therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and *sought to slay him*; because he not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was his own Father,—making himself equal with God." Jno. v. 16, 18. "Then said Jesus to them, yet a little while am I with you, and *then I go back to him who sent me*." Jno. vii. 33. "*I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again I leave the world and go to the Father*." Jno. xvi. 28. The concluding statement of the parable is that "he selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field." The Lord possessed much, and yet surrendered all; by his righteousness as man, he was entitled to the reward of God. By birth, as son of Abraham, he was heir to the land of Canaan; as son of David, "the Lord God gave to him the throne of His Father;" Luke i. 32. But although he necessarily knew that "he shall reign *over the house of Jacob* forever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end," (Luke i. 33), he relinquished *the immediate possession* of his dominion; he knew that "it was a light thing that he should be God's servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the desolation of Israel;" that he was "given for a light to the Gentiles, that he should be (the means of) deliverance to the end of the earth." Isa. xlix. 6. The purchase price, though familiar to all believers, is increasingly repudiated at a period of the world's history, of which the Lord Himself has

said, "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" "He gave himself a ransom for all." 1 Tim. ii. 6. "Feed the Church of God which *He hath purchased with His own blood.*" Acts xx. 28. "The bread which I will give is my flesh; which *I will give* for the life of *the world.*" Jno. vi. 51. "Ask of me and I will give thee the Gentiles for thine inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for thy possession." Psalm ii. 8. "The field" is doubtless a small territory, when compared with the myriads of worlds which lighten our darkness at night; of *the moral value* of this terrestrial ball we are, however, enabled to form some shadow of an estimate, when we regard it in the light of its purchase price. "He buyeth *that field.*" Small though it be, and incapable of being seen from the distant stars, 'that field' is yet of vast account in the history of the universe; for here the son of God will reign in person when "the sovereignty of the world hath become our Lord's and his Messiah's, and he shall reign forever and ever." Rev. xi. 15. Here the scene closes, and the Messiah departs—Lord, not only of the treasure, but of the world; prior to his departure however, a transaction took place in Jerusalem which typified this divine purchase: *a field was purchased for the price of a slave*: (Ex. xxi. 32; Zech. xi. 12, 13.) The evangelist who records this parable, records the chief priests' purchase, "And he (Judas) cast down the thirty pieces of silver *in the temple* (Zech. xi. 13) and departed, and went and hanged himself: and the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, "It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood. And they took counsel and BOUGHT WITH THEM THE POTTER'S FIELD, to bury strangers in, wherefore that field was called 'THE FIELD OF BLOOD' to this day." Matt. xxvii. 5-8.

The concluding portion of the "correspondences," of No. 17, will appear in No. 19.

## UNBELIEF.

The characteristic flippancies of the day found expression in the following fashion recently, on the writer enquiring in a Yonge Street store, for the son of an elderly Christian gentleman. The attendant informed the writer that the son of the gentleman referred to, "had not reached that stage of imbecility," involved by becoming a Christian. In the next establishment the writer entered, he learned that the occupant "didn't believe in a prophet sending bears after children who laughed at him;" the latter gentleman had not learned, (1) that the "children" of the authorized version were *youths*, (2) that they not only transgressed the divine command to "rise up before the hoary head," Lev. xix. 32; but (3) displayed their unbelief in the ascension of Elijah, by saying, "ascend, bald-head, ascend, bald-head," and (4) insulted the prophet, sent by the Almighty, as an exceptional mercy to the Israelitish nation. (5) Inasmuch as *law* cannot exist apart from penalties attaching to transgression thereof, and the dispensation, under which these occurrences took place was a dispensation of law, in contrast with forbearance and grace, the Most High Himself sent the bears, in vindication of his law. Forbearance is one of the characteristics of greatness, and doubtless one of the last thoughts dreamt of in the philosophy of unbelievers is that they themselves afford signal examples of its exercise on the part of Him who occupies the throne of the universe, to whom has been committed "all power in heaven and on earth." Matt. xxviii. 18.

## COINCIDENCE.

Gen. xvi. 12. "And he (Ishmael) will be a wild ass man." In answer to an enquiry as to whether the Bedouins could read, one Ibraim replied, "No, no, Bedouin man neither read nor write, Bedouin man just like donkey." Scotch deputation.