

Pulpit Criticism.

A WEEKLY SHEET.

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Published on Saturday, and sold at "The Citizen" Office, 57 Adelaide Street East.

PRICE \$1.00 PER ANNUM.

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

THE BAPTIST CHURCH, ALEXANDER STREET.

The writer wended his way to the church above-named in expectation of hearing something solid and good from the pulpit, and in that expectation he was not disappointed. Maturity of years, he felt, from the first, involved mellowness of judgment in the person of the gentleman who conducted the service—the Rev. Joshua Denovan. The portion of Scripture selected by Mr. D. for reading, extended from Rom. viii. 11, to the end of the chapter. In commenting on this portion, he gave us some important renderings, and omitted others; "*The creation* was made subject to vanity," and "*in hope that the creation* itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption." (vs. 20, 21), were the most important of the passages corrected; and it would have been well if the correction had extended to "we are saved *in hope*," (instead of "by,") v. 24. The sermon was based on Eph. i. 13, 14. "In whom (Christ) also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise or his glory." Before entering on the subject of this disquisition, the writer must indicate a moral consideration, which, so far as himself was concerned, paved the way

for a favourable impression of the sermon; *he was aware that, in the present case, there is no stipulation between the pastor and his flock*, and, unless he was greatly mistaken, this important fact might be *felt* throughout the service; there was not a particle of the hireling element about it. In addressing himself to the exposition of the above-selected passage, Mr. D. explained that the word rendered "earnest" signifies a deposit paid by a purchaser when a bargain is made; the purport of the deposit being to confirm the purchase, and to pledge the ultimate payment of the purchase-money. He added that this practice obtains among the Arabs at the present day, and that they still use the word *arrabon* ("earnest") in relation to it, a word which has been transferred from the Arabic language to the Greek. The word "arles," common in the rural parts of England and Scotland, Mr. D. said was traceable to the same root; the word signifies a pledge of agreement and payment. The custom of "arles" used to take two forms; (1) in relation to the transfer of lands; (2) in hiring farm servants of both sexes; the transfer of land could not be legal unless the buyer and seller repaired to the spot, and the seller illustrated his *earnestness* by giving the

buyer a handful of the earth as pledge of the possession of the portion purchased. In regard to the hiring of servants, no engagement of that kind was valid unless the binding "shilling" ("arles") was given by the employer to the servant. The Rev. gentleman then passed from the handful of earth as representing the land, and from the coin, as representing the wages, to that bestowal of the Holy Spirit on those who accept the testimony of the Gospel, which *to them* is "The earnest of their inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession." He proceeded to illustrate the foregoing verity by an imaginary visit to the royal residences at Windsor and Balmoral, and by an imaginary return visit to Bloor-street East, on the part of her Majesty, which, were such visits to take place, would necessarily display rare grace on the part of the Queen of Great Britain and Empress of India. He maintained, correctly enough, that such visits, were they to take place, would display kindness of an identical nature to that exhibited by the Sovereign of the Universe, towards those who believe in His anointed one. It would be more satisfactory to the critic if he could adopt the customary practice of uniformly applying the white-wash-brush, and could pass blemishes without notice, but he is satisfied that the grace which garrisons the heart of his brother Denovan will prevent his taking umbrage, if the writer indicates that the terms "brethren and sisters" addressed *to the congregation*, in the way of appeal as to whether "the seal of the Holy Spirit of God" had "been impressed on them," was *not* an appeal that could bear the light of Scripture. If "brethren" &c., there was no need for the appeal; if "the seal" had not been impressed on them, they were not "brethren." The second division of the discourse related to "the redemption of the purchased possession"—"God's own possession," according to the Revised Version. This the preacher explained in the following manner:—The body of believers are the inheritance of God the

Father; this inheritance, having been sold under sin, has been forfeited to justice, alienated from God; but by the intervention of the eternal Son, it has been "redeemed," purchased back in the courts of Heaven. As a consequence of this, not only has the individual believer's *spirit been redeemed* (it has been born from above, or regenerated, and is already in possession of eternal life, so that such an one is entitled to say with the apostle Paul, "absent from the body," "present with the Lord"), *but his body has been purchased* by the same wondrous transaction which resulted in the rescue of the undying part of him. The unfortunate rendering, "vile body," where we should say "poor," has apparently led our respected friend into some conclusions which he will find it difficult to support from the Book of final appeal. He tells us that "our gross material bodies need to undergo a physical process of purification," etc.; sin cannot be taken out of them except by their being disintegrated, pulverized, reduced to their original elements—carbon, ammonia, water, and lime. Enoch and Elijah may be satisfied were not "pulverized." The blessed body of the Lord, who, for us was "made sin," consisted, after resurrection, of "flesh and bones," and all we can be said to *know* on the subject, is that "we (believers) shall all be changed" (1 Cor. xvi. 51), and it would be well to confine ourselves rigidly to *what we know*. The resurrection-day (our friend proceeded to say) is the time when God's possession will be fully redeemed, and in this one can concur. The third division of the subject indicated that the object of this intervention on the part of the Messiah was "to the praise of the Father's glory." This, in contrast with any thought of contributing to it; the most that any creature, even the most exalted can do, is to praise the attributes and ways of Him who gave him existence, and endeavour to *reflect* his Creator's glory.

The sermon concluded with an exhortation to reduce this abstract teaching to

practice, and the *service* concluded with a hymn so exceptionally fine, that it must needs conclude this notice :

The dove let loose in Eastern skies,

Returning fondly home,
Ne'er stoops to earth her wing, nor flies,
Where idler warblers roam :—

But high she shoots through air and light,
Above all low delay,
Where nothing earthly bounds her flight,
Nor shadow dims her way.

So grant me, Lord, from every snare
Of sinful passion free,
Aloft, through faith's serener air,
To urge my course to Thee.

No sin to cloud, no lure to stay
My soul, as home she springs,
Thy sunshine on her joyful way,
Thy freedom on her wings.

—Moore.

BIOGRAPHY OF DR. WILD.—IV.

The deep draughts of Hebrew, Arabic, Greek, Latin, and of the Natural Sciences, in which the Dr. confesses to have indulged, produced in his case the familiar phenomenon of spectral illusions, hence, in his disordered imagination, the unoccupied halls of the Albert University were crowded with students. When, therefore, we read that "the Doctor is the owner of a fine estate near Hamilton, on Lake Ontario, all of which he has purchased and paid for out of lecture fees." we are led to conclude that, if there be no illusion in that case, "engineering" amongst a gullible public in relation to "The Lost Ten," must have proved more remunerative than mere civil engineering would have been likely to be. That he was early the subject of "visions" we gather from the statement that "the visions of his youth he has largely realized," and from this it would appear that he early cherished the idea of knowing where to lay his head. We gather also what, of course undesignedly, is calculated to flatter Canadians, that the Reverend gentleman "had always had it in his mind to spend his latter days in Canada, for from Canada he hoped to go to Heaven." It appears to be one of the Dr.'s amiable characteristics to champion the weak; "In Brooklyn he was specially noted for defending Britain. Whenever any one in public gatherings ventured to berate England, the Dr. was on

hand the following Sunday evening with a criticism and defence. Notwithstanding his strong British prejudices, the Americans admired and loved him." *With no desire to flatter*, himself, or that part of him, styled by courtesy, his biographer, states that "during his sojourn in Brooklyn he had his children in Canada being educated." It is a fair presumption, therefore, that the children did not revise the structure of their august parent's sentences. Dr. Wild not only signalized himself by defending the cause of feeble Britain, but took the otherwise defenceless "Church and society of the Union Congregational Church of Brooklyn" under his wing, and by such means introduced them to the Congregational Union of the United States. "It is the Dr.'s intention (we gather), to withdraw from this and similar associations, and to unite with kindred associations in Canada as soon as they are willing to admit Bond-Street Church with him. Even the "intentions" of Dr. Wild are subject to modification; hence he was content himself to enter the Congregational Union of Canada, after the fashion of a camel in "the needle's eye," and to leave the Bond Street Congregation outside. He took the Union Congregational Church, of Brooklyn, with him into the Union, and it is *his intention* to do the same with his church here." To the credit of the Ministerial Association of Ontario, or otherwise. Dr. W.'s "intentions," in courting the favour of the Association appear, by some strange (and probably unrecognized) act of Providence, to have been frustrated. The Association, we venture to suggest, will generously incline to accept the will in lieu of the deed, and yet it may be well that they should reconsider their resolution in view of the financial eloquence of this discarded divine, of which a brief specimen is subjoined. "And now, about the enlargement of the church, all I have to say is, that if some of you wealthy sinners will only fork out about \$40,000 to free our church from debt, we will soon find a means of enlarging it. It will lighten your pockets and your hearts, and make easier and smoother your road to heaven." Such is the man who crowds a church to overflowing, and such his utterances, in Toronto, in the year of grace 1882!!!

It appears to be a novel trick of the ministerial trade, in pulpits of a sufficiently debased character, to deal in obscene innuendo, in order to elicit the titters of that section

of the mob which is wont to applaud similar pollutions from that portion of the stage hitherto described as *secular*; one need hardly require a more striking illustration of the working of that "mystery (secret) of lawlessness," which is heading up to the period when "the lawless one will be revealed (2 Thess., ii. 7, 8), whom the Lord will consume with the breath of his mouth and destroy with the manifestation of his presence." The paragraph subjoined, relating to the restoration of Solomon's temple, points to the same period.

It was a remarkable oversight on the part of the financiers of Bond Street, when selecting their New Year's motto, that they should have decided on any other than that contained in Acts xix. 25—"By this craft we have our wealth."

RESTORATION OF SOLOMON'S TEMPLE.

Reuf Pasha, the Turkish Governor of Jerusalem, so the London *Daily Telegraph* is informed, has recently received imperative orders from Sultan Abdul Hamid to resume the work of restoration of Solomon's Temple begun under the reign of Abdul Aziz, but discontinued some five years ago. "The Pasha has also been instructed," it says, "to clear the great square fronting the Temple of all the rubbish and rank vegetation with which it is at present encumbered. In this square stands the famous mosque of Omar, which derives a revenue of some \$75,000 a year from Pilgrim contributions and other sources. Hitherto the greater portion of this sum found its way annually to Stamboul. The Sultan, however, has decreed that henceforth it shall be applied to defraying the expenses of the works above alluded to, the present resumption of which, as well as their original inception, is due in reality to suggestions made at different times to the Ottoman authorities by members of the Austrian imperial family. The restoration of the Temple ruins was begun at the instance of Francis Joseph during his visit to the Holy Land, shortly after the accession of Abdul Aziz to the throne; and it was the recent pilgrimage of the Archduke Rudolph to Judea that imparted a fresh impulse to the interrupted enterprise. Not only has the Commander of the Faithful signified it to be his sovereign will that

the works should be carried out without further delay, but two officials of the Sublime Porte, Serid and Raif Effendim, have already left Constantinople for Jerusalem, with instructions to take measures on their arrival for ensuring the literal fulfilment of His Majesty's decree. The gratitude of Christians and Jews alike is due to Abdul Hamid for lending his high authority to so generous and enlightened an undertaking." With regard to the "*gratitude of Christians*" bespoken by the editor of the London *Daily Telegraph*, it may suffice to observe that the proprietor of that paper is a Jew, and is consequently unaware that a further stage in these proceedings is delineated in II Thess. ii. 3, 4, wherein we read of "that man of sin being revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God."

ODE TO "THE TRIBE OF MANASSEH" AND DR. WILD.

The Lion and the Unicorn were wont to disagree—
Quoth Leo to the Unicorn, "begone, beyond the sea;"
Said Unicorn (erect his horn), "What matters that to me?"

Like rocking-horse, the waves across,
Bestrode this *wild Manasseh* horse,
This trotter straight from "Banbury Cross,"
This Anglo-Yankee Pegasus.
Heels in the air, the charger fair,
With shivered chain, athwart the main,
Regirt with golden collar—
Hied to the land of prairies grand,
Land of the *pacific* strand,
Land of the mighty dollar.
Land of the covetous! the free!
The *only* land of liberty!
Land of the *cornu copiae*!

Happily Wild was an unborn child,
The Bond-street mob as yet unbeguild,
When the Unicorn breasted the billows wild;
Else the quadruped's back had but served as a hack,
For Joseph Bellerophon, saddle and pack—
In each of his hands, a union jack—
And Joseph had food for the fishes become,
With the ten tribes of Israel, minus a home!