

# Pulpit Criticism.

A WEEKLY SHEET.

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## THE "NEW JERUSALEM TEMPLE."

That "the oracles" of God were originally communicated to the people of God, and that in the Christian era, the several portions of the New Testament were successively committed to the keeping of the Church is undeniable; that the professing Church as it increased in corruption, found it to its interest to withhold the Scriptures from the people will as little be denied; but few will have the boldness to represent that the unrestricted dissemination of the Scriptures has been an unmixed benefit; if any should be disposed to maintain that to be the case, they need not travel far to ascertain the evil consequences of treating the Bible as a text-book in schools; the surest way to make a child hate any book is to compel him to learn it, and to punish him for not learning it. The portion of the Old Testament read in the Morning service of the above named "temple," Numb. xv, 1-29, and read without any attempt at exposition, might as well have been read backwards, so far as the understanding of it on the part of the congregation was concerned, and the same remark, in the writer's judgment, would apply to almost the whole of the service. There is a class of persons whose admiration for a sermon is proportioned to their lack of apprehension of its meaning; such persons would probably meet with a perpetual feast, by betaking themselves to the "New Jerusalem Temple." The writer was kindly informed that he could be furnished with a key to the understanding of the mysteries of this Church's teaching, if he desired it, but as the liturgy and the sermon to which he endeavored to listen, were considerably handed to him at the close of the service, he concluded that when ignorance is happiness, 'tis unwise to be wise. Few indeed are the sects which do not traditionally treat the Bible as if it were a kaleidoscope; in all but every case however they look into it, so to speak, *at the broad end*, they consequently present us with pictures of utter confusion and contradiction; in this respect, "the New Jerusalem Church" stands preeminent; they manifestly are not possessed of the remotest shadow of a notion of "rightly dividing." They appeal from our "outer sense" to a supposed "inner sense," but even a cursory glance at any of their teachings will suffice to satisfy any ordinary Christian that they are lacking as to "the root of the matter." In order to illustrate the mode of worship of what may

be termed this Swedenborgian Church, it will be necessary to give extracts from its liturgy, and from the printed, and doubtless authorized sermon to which the writer endeavored to listen on the 23rd inst. Prior to giving these extracts however, it may be well to invite attention to that spirit of "lawlessness" (2 Thess. 11, 7, Gr.) and to that disposition to "heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears," (2 Tim, IV, 3,) which are two of the predicted characteristics of the last days of this dispensation; instead of individually "feeling after" truth if haply they may find it, according to the injunction of the Apostle Paul, (Acts VII, 27), men find it more congenial to their disposition to elect a teacher, to set him on a pinnacle, as it were, and then to amuse themselves after a similar fashion to those Asiatics who "about the space of two hours" exercised their lungs by crying "great is Diana of the Ephesians." The consequences of adopting such a course are strikingly illustrated by the liturgy and sermon referred to above; the frontispiece of the liturgy presents us with three brief articles of a creed, the unexpressed object of which is to disavow the doctrine of the Trinity; the first of these articles is worded thus, "Jehovah is the Lord before He assumed humanity in flesh." It would be well for persons who essay to enlighten us all, to have some regard to the requirements of the vernacular tongue, but waiving that consideration, we have a piece of childish folly in the first four words; the title "Jehovah," assumed by the Almighty, in relation to Israel, is first recorded in Ex. III, and wherever, throughout the Bible the name "Jehovah" occurs, it is uniformly rendered by the English words "the Lord," so that although the design of those who propounded this liturgy is perfectly plain, if the words which meet one's eyes on opening it, convey any truth, it is the same in its nature as "the earth is the world." This liturgy is prefaced by what purports to be an explanation of the principles of the body which uses it. The author

thereof assumes a didactic tone throughout, but inasmuch as the writer is of opinion that his readers would as little recognize the qualifications of a teacher in this gentleman (or lady) as himself, he will leave "the principles" unnoticed. The compiler or compilers of this liturgy, by dividing the month into what they term "Sabbaths," have done their best to promulgate the sabbaticising of the Lord's day, a delusion of which the Church heard nothing from the first to the sixteenth century. If men were not more influenced by traditional teaching than by the teaching of Scripture, they could hardly fail to perceive that there was design in the circumstance of the Lord lying in the grave on the Sabbath, and that it was when that seventh day was past (Mark XVI, 1,) that early in the morning, *the first of the week*, they came to the sepulchre when the sun was risen (All MSS.) The sun of Righteousness had already risen, and as the Apostle Paul (Col. 11, 16, 17,) teaches us, had, by rising, dispelled all shadows, "the Sabbath" included. The same apostle refers to this subject, on three occasions, and on each, for the purpose of abrogating the sabbatic observance of the day; the remaining two passages will be found in Rom. XIV, 5; and Gal. IV, 9-11. Much more might be written on this subject, and perhaps should be, to render it sufficiently clear; but another opportunity to dilate on it, may present itself ere long. The liturgy commences with an "acknowledgment," the bearing of which presents a phase of unitarianism: the selection for "the fourth Sabbath in the month" is as follows; and in common with every other portion of the prayer-book, *shuffles* the various passages of Scripture which occur therein, as card-players do their cards.

"Jehovah is in His Holy Temple; let all the earth keep silence before Him Hab. 11, 20.

Hear O Israel, Jehovah our God is One Jehovah. Deut. VI, 4.

In Judah is God known: His name is great in Israel. In Salem also is His

Tabernacle, and His dwelling place in Zion. Ps. lxxxvi, 2.

Jehovah is my Shepherd, I shall not want, He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul:— He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness, for his *name's* sake. Ps. xxiv, 1-3. (These people are not aware that the word "name" is, according to the Jews, one of the names of the Messiah.)

I am the good Shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. John x, 14.

And there shall be One Fold and One Shepherd. John x, 16.

Open ye the gates that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth, may enter in." Is. xxvi, 2.

By way of comment on the above group of passages, it may be permissible to observe that an "inner sense," or some sense that is alien to common sense is obviously needed, in order to understand the propriety of adapting a statement made by the prophet Habakkuk in contrast with idolatrous worship, to the worship of those who are supposed to be Christians; of such persons, the statements of the New Testament are of the character of the following—"And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Eph. ii, 6. With regard to the second passage, it may be well to observe that the Jews to this day, have it written on their doorposts, and in both of their phylacteries, in obedience to the commandment recorded in Deut. xi, 18, 20. (the passage extending from Deut. xi, 13-21, is also written on the door posts, and in the phylacteries of the Jews.) For consistency's sake it might be well that the citizens of "the New Jerusalem" should don the phylacteries. Their object in *exceptionally introducing this passage* into every Morning service is identical with that of the Jews of this city, who have placed it above the entrance to their synagogue; they suppose, no doubt, that it outweighs such passages as John xv, 26, but they

overlook the fact of unity and plurality existing in their own persons. The seventy-sixth psalm is entitled in the Septuagint, "A song respecting the Assyrian," and its tenor agrees with the supposition that it refers to the destruction of Sennacherib's army; by what stretch of imagination it can be made to apply to the Elm Street "Temple," it were hard to say; that this psalm, in common with all the others, will be sung by Israel and Judah bye and bye, in Jerusalem, will not be doubted by those who have any apprehension of the far-reaching range of prophecy on the one hand, and of the indications of approaching fulfilment on the other. The twenty-third Psalm has been the solace and support of myriads, in trial of all kinds, and especially in view of approaching dissolution; it is suitable alike for public worship, or for private meditation. The passages from the 10th of John are intended to be applied to the Almighty *as God*. The phrase "the righteous nation," of the concluding passage, might have been supposed to point, with sufficient clearness to the only nation that ever was, or ever will be so styled, and has no more connection with "New Jerusalem" than it has with Constantinople. The sermon was supposed to be based on the enquiry, "Can man provide food for the Lord?" A few extracts from it will perhaps impress most readers with their need of an "internal" or some other sense, in order to comprehend it. "The man of the Church (we are told) must acquire scientifics from the Word by studying it in humility before the Lord." "The scientifics of the external and internal senses must be put into the memory, and at length into the conduct of life. "In man's ascent toward heaven, his next step is the cultivation of the sciences, natural, civil, moral, and religious. For this purpose, schools colleges, the printing-press, and institutions of learning, in every department of human intelligence, are provided, whereby man may become, natural rational, civil rational, moral ra-

tional, and religious rational. The last is the crowning work of all." As the writer is unwilling that his readers' heads should be in any such state as was his own, when he quitted the "New Jerusalem Temple," he will forbear to give further extracts from the document which, no doubt, was indited and printed with a view to enlighten all those who are not sufficiently obdurate to prefer darkness to light. In view of all this, one is apt to speculate on the probability of the Chinese inhabitants of Toronto erecting a joss-house, and on the further probability of their fellow-citizens so far acquiescing in the undertaking as to extend to them immunity from all municipal burdens, in view of their beneficent enterprise.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT.

That blind guide "*The Globe*," appears to have misled more than one person with regard to the "forty-thousand acres" supposed to be possessed by the Rev. Dr. Potts, in connexion with the Temperance Colonization Society's project in Manitoba. Two trustworthy friends communicated the supposed fact to the editor, of the possession of this tract of land by the Rev. gentleman, and the mode in which it was supposed to have been acquired was told by one of them. It transpires that the "forty-thousand" are of the nature of a soap-bubble, blown from *The Guelph Herald* to *The Globe*, and that so far as Dr. Potts is a stock-holder of the Colonization Society, he is entirely on a par with other holders of stock in the enterprize. There can be no doubt that the society knows how to estimate the commercial value of the use of his name, and if they elect to express their sense of its value, by a transfer of forty-thousand acres to his possession, the Dr.'s critic would be one of many who would be assured that he would make good use of his acquisition.

TALMUDICAL LAWS.

"And thus a man must not take anything from a shop-keeper by weight or measure (on a holy day) only let him say to the shop-keeper, Fill this vessel for me; and on the morrow he gives him the value. And even though the vessel should be one set apart for the purpose of measuring, he may fill it, provided that the name of a measure be not mentioned.—*Hilchoth*. Jom. Tov. c. iv. 20.

"If a firstborn beast and its offspring fall into a pit, the first is to be helped out on condition of slaughtering it, but it is not slaughtered. Then guile is to be used, and the second also helped out on condition of slaughtering it, and then they slaughter which of the two they please. On account of the affliction of the animals, it has been pronounced lawful to use guile.—*Ibid*, c. ii.

"He who takes off the hide of a beast on a holy day, must not salt it, for this is work, and he would be guilty of doing work that is not necessary for the preparation of food. . . . But it is lawful to salt meat for roasting on the top of the hide, and in this matter guile is employed. How so? Thus: A little meat is salted on one part, and then a little on another part, until the whole hide be salted.—*Ibid*, c. iii, 4.

"But if a Gentile employ himself in the law, or keep a Sabbath, or make any innovation, he is to be beaten and punished, and informed that he is for this, guilty of death—but he is not to be killed.—*Hilchoth Melachim*, c. x, 9.

"Rabbi Meyer, of Rothenburg, has said in his writings, that a man may seek for something in the room by the light of a candle, yea, though it be still day (the Sabbath,) and then, leave it lighting until night." (*Arbah Turim*, 527).

This was intended as an evasion of a self-imposed law against lighting a candle.—*Ed*.