

Pulpit Criticism.

A WEEKLY SHEET.

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THE KNOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

The pulpit of this church was occupied by Prof. McLaren on the 19th inst. On entering the building, anyone who had been accustomed to reflect on the simple, and doubtless essentially philosophical mode of worship adopted in the "upper room," would be struck with the evidence of what had come of the development-theory in matters ecclesiastical; instead of any trace of "eating together" (see margin Acts i. 4), one is confronted with a canopied pulpit, supported and surrounded by richly dignified organ pipes, which the "godly Gilfillans" of oven the recent past, would have denounced as "a bag o' whistles." Leaving that, however, without further comment, we will direct attention to the officiating minister; when defects happen to be prominent, it becomes necessary to comment on them, and the writer has to confess that he was reminded on this occasion of a practice which is far from uncommon, not in churches only, but wherever the Bible is read; persons are wont to treat the sacred volume as if the mere perusal of it, regardless of any meaning it may happen to convey, possessed some talismanic charm; they therefore assume a demure aspect, befitting the occasion, and it is probably well for them that they are not required to pass an examination on the subject-matter with which their minds are supposed to have been occupied. The paraphrases of the Psalms appear to have been compiled on this principle. The professor, on the present occasion, appeared to be actuated by the same, as he read both from the book of Isaiah, and from the Gospel of John without a word of comment on either portion. Inasmuch as He who caused the respective portions to be written, has also thought fit to characterise the former of them by some peculiarities of structure, it may be well to indicate them, so far as the writer is acquainted with them. The exhortation "fear not" in connection with "for I have redeemed thee," occurring in the first verse of chapter xliii, may be regarded as an echo of a similar exhortation at chapter xli. 14. There are seven of these dehortations, extending from chapter xli. 10, to xliv. 8, inclusively; the intervening occurrences of the passage may be seen at chapters xli. 13, 14, xliii. 1, 5, xliv. 2. There are sixteen occurrences of the word, "re-

doemer" in Isaiah, including the verbal forms in chapters xliii. 1, xlv, 22, 23, and as the number eight is that of redundant Divine perfection, the doubling the number in the present instance is the more remarkable. Subjoined is the list of the passages—Chapters xli. 14, xliii. 1, 14, xlv. 6, 22, 23, 24, xlvii. 4, xlviii. 17, xlix. 7, 26, liv. 5, 8, lix. 20, lx. 16, and lxiii. 16. It may be well to illustrate the meaning of "redundancy," in this connection, by the octave in music, and to observe that the same thing occurs in Scripture, where the first day of the week is identical with the eighth. The ground on which fear was to be banished from the mind of Israel (whether literal or spiritual) and the consequences of Jehovah's intervention in their behalf, are also grouped in sevens—Ch. xliii. i, "Fear not, for (1) I have redeemed thee, (2) I have called thee by thy name; (3) thou art mine. (4) When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; (5) and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: (6) when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; (7) neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. (1) For I am Jehovah thy God, (2) the Holy One of Israel, thy Messiah: (3) I gave Egypt for my ransom, (4) Ethiopia and Seba for thee. (5) Since thou hast been precious in my sight, thou hast been glorious, (6) and I have loved thee. (7) Therefore will I give men for thee, even people for thy life." No sooner do we reach the "wills," &c., (v. 4) than we find another group (of twelve) overlapped by, and commencing with the seventh of the preceding group. The number twelve is constantly found in connection with earthly perfection (v. 4). "Therefore (1) will I give men for thee (2) even people for thy life, (3) I will bring thy seed from the east, (4) and gather thee from the west, (5) I will say to the north, give up; (6) and to the south, keep not back: (7) bring my sons from far, (8) and my daughters from the ends of the

earth; (9) every one who is called by My Name: (10) for I have created him for my glory, (11) I have formed him; (12) yea, I have made him." It is more than probable that some eminently *practical* individuals may ask "What is the good of all this?" Such persons, if so disposed, can enquire what is the benefit of the colours of the rainbow. He who arranged the colours arranged the enumeration of these sentences. We might have been enlightened, had the Professor stopped to communicate his ideas as to the country indicated in the sixth verse, by the designation "the north," and "the south," respectively; in the absence of such aid, a reference to Is. xxvii. 13, may assist us, as we read there of the gathering of the same people—"And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be sounded, and they shall come who are lost or *wander as exiles*, not in Great Britain, or in the United States, as a certain "finished logician" affirms, but according to the prophet Isaiah, "in the land of Assyria." "And the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship Jehovah in the holy mount at Jerusalem." This verse is one of three portions selected for use in the Jewish service for the New Year. When at the ninth verse, in the view of assembled nations, the prophet enquires "who among them can *declare* this?" it is manifest that he refers to the ninth verse of chapter xlii, where the Almighty says, "new things *do I declare*," here again we have the word "declare" occurring eight times, namely at Chs. xlii. 9. xliii. 9. xlv. 7 8. xlv. 21. xlv. 10. and xlviii. 3, 5. With Gen. xli. 32, and Jer. i. 13. to instruct us as to the import of repetition in scripture, we may gather that the repetition of the expression "ye are *My witnesses*" (Is. 43. 10, 12,) is for the sake of emphasis. At the tenth verse, the occurrence of the phrase "my servant" (as explained in No. 4 of this series,) is one of a double series, seven of which relate to the Messiah, and seven to Israel; those relating

to Christ occur at xlii. 1, 19. xliii. 10, xlix. 3, 5, 6. and at lii. 13. the passages relating to Israel occur at xli, 8, 9. xliv. 2, 21. xlv, 4 and lxxv. 8. The title of "King," taken by the Almighty in connection with His eternal and covenant title Jehovah, which we meet with in the fifteenth verse, *occurs thrice*; the other passages containing it being Chs. xli. 41, and xlv. 6. In the 16th and 17th verses, we have another instance of the arrangement of sentences in a group of eight; "Thus saith Jehovah, (1) who maketh a way in the sea. (2) and a path in the mighty waters; (3) who bringeth forth the chariot, and horse (4) the army and the power; (5) they shall lie down together, (6) they shall not rise, (7) they are extinct, (8) they are quenched as tow." It might have been instructive had the professor stopped to explain the meaning of "but thou hast made me to serve with thy sins," (v. 24) but as he did not, we may probably gather the meaning from Jno. v. 17, where the Lord observes "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work; from the time the first human falsehood was told—"neither shall ye touch it," (Gen. iii. 3.) to the present day, the Almighty has "wrought" (Eze. xx. 9) to counteract, and to vanquish the evil so mysteriously introduced. In the public worship of the Church of Rome, the only audible reference to the Bible reaches one from the pulpit; in the worship of the Presbyterian Church as represented by Professor McLaren, while one has the "open Bible," the boast of Protestantism, it is rendered as nugatory as possible, by being read as above indicated. The first time the writer is favored with a confidential conversation with Archbishop Lynch, he will suggest the desirability of His Grace extending his feelers to Knox College, with a view to inducing the Professor to approximate more closely to Rome. The archbishop would doubtless, for a consideration, supply the professor with holy water, wherewith to sprinkle the Caledonian "bairns."

Further comment on Professor McLaren's ministrations must be postponed for a week.

TESTIMONY.

One of the most prominent members of the Free-Thought Associations of the Dominion says:—

"Scarcely a day elapses in which persons, principally from the Bond street Congregational Church, do not apply to me for infidel books; the conviction of the Free-Thought Associations is that Dr. Wild is their best friend, in the sense of increasing their number."

THE GOOD SAMARITAN.

KEY TO THE PARABLE.

The subjoined laws, extracted from the Talmud, indicate the relation which the above named parable was designed to occupy towards them. "An Israelite who kills a sojourning proselyte, is not put to death on this account by the tribunal, for it is said, "But if a man come presumptuously upon his neighbour." Ex. 21 14. A sojourning proselyte was not regarded as a neighbour, hence the force of the enquiry (Luke x. 29) "and who is my neighbour?" "An Israelite who unintentionally kills a slave, or a sojourning proselyte, is imprisoned, (in one of the cities of refuge)." "And so a sojourning proselyte, who unintentionally kills a sojourning proselyte, or a slave, is imprisoned." "A sojourning proselyte who unintentionally kills an Israelite, although he did it unintentionally, is to be put to death." Hilchoth Ratzeech, c. v. 3, Num. xxxv. 15. "If a Gentile, and idolater, be seen perishing, or drowning in a river, he is not to be helped out. If he be seen near to death, he is not to be delivered. But to destroy him, by active means, or to push him into a pit, or such like thing, is forbidden, as he is not at war with us." Hilchoth Accus, c., x, i. The teaching of Lev. xix. 16, in contrast with the above human law is, "thou shalt not stand by the blood of thy neighbour." that is, thou shalt not remain inactive when thy neighbour's life is in danger. The writer obtained the foregoing laws from a book entitled "The Old Paths," by the late Dr. Alexander McCaul; the book was kindly lent him by the late Dean of Toronto, and he gladly avails himself of the present opportunity to express his heartfelt regret on account of the decease of this estimable gentleman for whose memory, (in common with all who were personally acquainted with him) he will always cherish a cordial regard.

SENNACHERIB'S WILL.

TRANSLATED BY REV. A. H. SAYCE, M.A.

I, Sennacherib, king of multitudes, king of Assyria, have given chains of gold, crowns and chains besides all the riches, of which there are heaps, crystal* and another precious stone, and bird's-stone: one and a half manehs (Eze. xlv. 12.) two and a half cibi, according to their weight: to Ezar-haddon my son, who was afterwards named Assur-ebil-mucin-pal according to my desire; the treasure of the temple of Amuk, and (Nebo)-irik-erba, the harpists of Nebo. Is. xxxvii. 38. And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech, ("splendour of the king,") and Sharezer ("help of the prince,") his sons, smote him with the sword; and they escaped into the land of Armenia; and Ezarhaddon, ("the noble prince") his son, reigned in his stead.

*The fragments of a crystal throne inscribed with the name of Sennacherib, and disinterred from the ruins of his palace, are now in the British Museum.

ASSYRIAN SABBATH.

Among the Assyrians, the first 28 days of every month were divided into four weeks of seven days each, the 7th 14th 21st and 28th days respectively, being sabbaths; and there was a general prohibition of work on these days, p. 19 Assy. Canon. The days were dedicated to the sun and moon, and five planets, (hence our Sunday and Monday,) and to the deities who presided over these. In one of the newly-found fragments, which recount the Chaldean version of the creation, the appointment of the stars as "leaders of the week," is mentioned, and the same fragment records the mode in which the moon was made "to go forth from the heaven on the 7th day." The expression "day of rest," found in the inscriptions, was but the Assyrian translation of an older Accadian equivalent, which signified "dies nefastus." There exists a kind of Saint's Calendar for the month Elul, with notes relating to the religious duties devolving on the king, on each day; the memorandum attached to the 7th day is the following—"the 7th day, the festival of Merodach and Zirpanitu; a holy day. A Sabbath for the ruler of great nations. Sodden flesh (and) cooked fruit he may not eat. Hi

clothes he may not change, (new) garments he may not put on, sacrifices he may not offer, the king his chariot may not drive, in royal fashion he may not legislate, a place of assembly for the judge he may not establish, medicine for his ailments of body he may not apply. To make a measured square it is suitable. During the (ensuing) night, in the presence of Merodach and Istar, the king should erect his altar, offer a sacrifice, and, lifting up his hand, worship (in) the high place of the god."

The 21st day of the month was consecrated to the moon and the sun; on that day white garments might not be worn, and the sacrifice to the gods was to be performed at dawn.

The word Sabbattu (Sabbath) occurs in the inscriptions, and is explained as "a day of rest for the heart."

It may not be superfluous to observe that the will of Sennacherib, and all matter relating to Assyria, has been obtained from inscriptions in a language which had been slumbering unknown beneath the "heaps" of Nineveh and Babylon for twenty centuries and more.

The studied enumeration of Biblical statements, the object of which varies with the several numbers, is little known to the generality of Biblical students. Subjoined are twelve statements of the gospel, which occur in Is. ch. liii.

- "It was our griefs that He bore." } v. 4.
- "It was our sorrows that He carried." } v. 4.
- "He was wounded for our transgressions." } v. 5.
- "Bruised for our iniquities." } v. 5.
- "The chastisement of our peace was upon him." } v. 5.
- "And with his stripes we are healed." } v. 10.
- "But Jehovah made the iniquities of us all to fall on him." v. 6.
- "For the transgression of my people was he smitten." v. 8.
- "When his life shall have made a sacrifice for sin." v. 10.
- "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied." v. 11.
- "He shall bear their iniquities." v. 11.
- "And bare the sin of many." v. 12.