

Rev. W. Goodwin.
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Pulpit Criticism.

WITH

ANSWERS TO OBJECTIONS TO THE BIBLE.

A WEEKLY SHEET.

BY DAVID EDWARDS.

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ST. PATRICK'S CHURCH.

WILLIAM STREET.

The sermon at this Church was their accommodation, insisted on preached by the Reverend Father the writer leaving the Church, Burke, Superior of the Order of and in default, informed him that Redemptorists, of Quebec, on the he should send for a policeman; morning of the 5th inst. The rev. the obdurate editor of "PULPIT gentleman first read the gospel of CRITICISM," shocking to relate, the day from Matt. ix. 18-26, and still resisted this soft impeachment, took for his text the passage and discovered at the close of the "Have courage, daughter, thy service, that a friend had assured faith hath made thee whole." His these disturbers of his peace that simple, earnest, and cultured he was unlikely to play the part of manner elicited one's sympathy. Guy Fawkes amongst them; the from the first: he had not advanced blue coat was consequently not ed far in his discourse however, brought into requisition. The before a lay member of the Church preacher briefly dilated on the pushed past all the other occupants two miracles recorded in the por- of the seat where the writer was tion above-named, and laid special sitting, and informed him that a stress on the exercise of faith as gentleman at the door wished to the instrumental means of deliver- see him; the writer, for his part, lance; he observed that this "faith declined the interview; shortly is the gift of God," and that "with- afterwards a black-robed verger out faith it is impossible to please renewed the attack, after a more God"; he appealed also to "the pronounced fashion, remarked that Divine and infallible Word." and the occupants of the seat paid for observed that the fact that God

required faith on the part of man, is itself an evidence that the demand is reasonable; he proceeded however to introduce the claims of "the holy and infallible Church," which were represented as having "come down unchanged and unsullied through the ages;" this gentleman is not the only one who appears to take for granted that his hearers are, as indeed in this city, they were likely to be, wholly unacquainted with the history of professing Christendom; he told us that the above-named "holy Church could not by possibility teach error," and notwithstanding the stress laid on the necessity of the exercise of individual faith, we were all supposed to have become "the children of God's holy Church by baptism." The writer could not but reflect on the relation which all that he saw and heard on this occasion occupied towards infidelity, and he could arrive at no other conclusion than that *what he saw especially* had the distinct tendency to abet it; as our choice was stated from the pulpit to lie between the acceptance of *all* the precepts of "the holy church," or none, it is not easy to make an exception in favor of the preacher; *when the Almighty demands faith on our part, he supports his demand by every kind of imaginable and unimaginable evidence; when man demands it, he presents no foundation on which it is to rest, save one of "wood, hay, stubble," etc.* The urgency with which faith of the latter kind is advocated at the present day, would appear to indicate a misgiving on the part of its advocates, that the stubble foundations are giving way. The faith which is "the light of the intellect," which "came from heaven, and is calculated to lead us thither," is not that which accepts the statements of Augustine as to the endlessness of punishment, etc., though it may be that they who believe the Bible does not teach such a dogma, are in what the preacher on this occasion, designated as "an unhappy state of grace," which itself was possibly a somewhat unhappy mode of expression. By way of enforcing the doctrine that "faith without works is dead," the preacher enquired of what use it is for a Catholic who believes the power of the priest to forgive sins, and yet fails to reduce his faith to practice, by coming to confession; what availed it to believe that the Lord is present in the adorable sacrifice of the altar, and yet fails to receive the Divine Lord into his soul. It was manifest that this gentleman exceeded the limit of time allowed for his harangue, as he received a hint respecting its flight, in the form of the tinkling of a bell, after which, we were soon relieved by hearing our old acquaintance "finally." One word relating to the stage-manager of this establishment, before we conclude; that gentleman must be sadly astray in his estimate of the spectacle presented to the audience, if he be not aware that the order issued to the acolytes to place the palms of their hands together, after the fashion of the mediæval figures which appear in stained glass, etc., presents in its execution, an appearance in the highest degree ridiculous:

A letter has been received from one of the "Disciples," and as the Editor has understood that another is forthcoming, they will probably appear, or at least the substance of them will be printed in the ensuing number of the "CRITICISM."

THE CHINESE CLASS.

SHAFTESBURY HALL.

(THIRD NOTICE.)

The more that lay-labor, as it is termed, is contrasted with the average ministerial, the more manifest will be its comparative simplicity, sincerity, and power; in making such a remark, it may be well to add that this is attributable to the several ecclesiastical systems, rather than to the men they mould; lay persons appear to some of us to occupy about the same relation to the ordinary "minister" that a plant in its natural state does to an exotic; the piety of the minister is necessarily more or less professional and forced, his religious studies are likewise warped by the views of the sect which has trained him for a special purpose, and the inevitable consequence is that his pulpit-production is as definitely the result of his training, as are those dwindled and diminutive oranges, which we are wont to see in a conservatory, and the flavor of the essays is but too apt to correspond with that of the oranges. These being the sentiments of the writer, he does not deem it necessary to apologize for inviting his readers' attention to the progress which has been made, in respect to the class of Chinamen, since he last had the satisfaction to notice the proceedings of the class. On entering the room, he observed that the table, instead of being a moderate sized one, in the centre, extended from end to end of the room, and that chairs were packed together all round it; as he was there before the time of meeting, he examined the various illustrations of Bible manners and customs, and the texts with which

the walls are suitably adorned, among which he observed that two present the passages "Jehovah Jireh," and "Ebenezer," in large Chinese characters. An harmonium too was among the accessories to the furniture of the room. As the Chinamen successively arrived, they came in with the broadest of grins: one of the oldest attendants of the class, on learning that his lady-teacher was prevented coming by indisposition, made for the door, for Chinamen don't believe in change (of teachers); he however was induced to remain, and at first he condescended to allow another lady-teacher to instruct him, but he was not long before he was ungallant enough to dismiss her, and actually displayed his bad taste by requesting the writer to take her place; probably he was not aware that it was the editor of two obnoxious little journals, on whom he conferred his favors. As the English sentences which were the subject of the lesson, were accompanied by a Chinese translation, the writer had the privilege of being instructed in the celestial language, by way of reciprocity. It was highly satisfactory to see so many as sixteen of these poor fellows, each with a teacher of the opposite sex, and the whole party so exceptionally happy and cheerful. Nineteen were expected, and there are but twenty in the city. Their natural cleverness is amazing, and as most persons reason from their own experience, they will perhaps be slow to believe that one of them wrote well in English on a slate, and he had only tried to write once before; this fact was assured both by his teacher and by Mr. Morse, the genial superintendent of the class. Another of the pupils, of

the age of fifteen, made printed English characters well on his third visit to the class.

A short portion of Scripture is read by the superintendent at these meetings, and expounded by the several teachers; each meeting is commenced and closed with prayer, and we doubt not that private prayer is habitually presented on behalf of the pupils; faith and hope are at present exercised in relation to the class, and they are unlikely to be exercised in vain. Gladly should this notice of the proceedings of the class have been completed without a word of abatement from the terms of praise, had that been possible, but when either "heathen Chinese," or equally heathen Canadian have "I am so glad that Jesus loves me" thrust into their lips, it is (of course unintentionally but not less really) teaching them to play the hypocrite; few indeed are the assemblies of professing Christians where this baneful practice does not obtain.

The subjoined lines are the result of a blunder made from one of the most worthily occupied pulpits in Toronto; if all the blunders of all the ministers in the city should prove to be similarly fruitful, we may safely predict a deluge of poetry before the comet puts in its next appearance:—

THE WORKING-MAN.

I honor the grip of the horny hand,
And the smile of the sun-browned face;
I honor ye all—ye the strength of our land;
The worthy stock of an ancient band
Who ne'er thought labor disgrace.

I honor too, the venerable sire,
For his rugged intelligence;
His face all aglow as the furnace fire,
His great heart beating with honest desire,
And his words full of common-sense.

For us was thy strong manly back bent down,
For us thy straight limbs deformed;
While the lords of the earth with haughty frown,
And the judges and priests robed in silken gown,
Imagined the world reformed.

Thou wert the conscript on whom the lot fell,
And fighting our battles wer't mar'd;
In thee too a soul God created to swell
To break the incrustated adhesions of hell,
White demon; around thee war'd.

Toil on, son of earth, thy duty is clear,
Thy story is easily read;
Thy children to feed, to clothe, and to rear,
The cold piercing winds of Winter to fear—
Thy reward—indispensable bread.

J. GORDON SHERIFF.

Toronto, Oct., 1882.

In the event of any irregularity occurring in the delivery of this publication, the Editor requests that he may be addressed respecting it.