

April 15th, 1882.

No. 14.

Pulpit Criticism.

A WEEKLY SHEET.

BY DAVID EDWARDS.

Published on Saturday, and sold at 20 Queen Street East, Toronto.

PRICE \$1.00 PER ANNUM.

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

THE PRIMITIVE METHODIST CHURCH.

CARLTON STREET.

The pulpit of this church was occupied by the Rev. J. C. Antliff on the morning of the 9th inst. Prior to attempting to describe the mode in which the service was conducted by this gentleman, it may be well to observe that the distinction between this great-grandchild of Rome and its Methodist parent consists in the greater power of voting maintained by the laity in the "conferences" of the body: the lay element in the assemblies of the Primitive Methodists being represented in the voting, in the proportion of two laymen to one minister: certain ministers, apart from this proportionate consideration, are nevertheless *allowed to speak, but not to vote* on these occasions. It may be permitted to a bystander to observe that this arrangement appears to savor of the grace of the exercise of which we read in the sixth chapter of the Acts, v. 1, when "there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews": the Hebrews, as we gather from the Greek names of the deacons, said in effect, "look ye to that," so in the present instance, the ministers appear to have acted in the spirit of those twelve who said "we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the

ministry of the word." With regard to the officiating minister in Carlton street, it must be obvious to all who have listened to him that had he thought fit to choose "the chief seats in the synagogues," he would have received slippers, watch-pockets, smoking-caps, braces, and brush-bags enough to have furnished a King street depot with ladies work, but he has had the heroism to forego the slippers, and to leave the brush-bags to less worthy recipients, hence he preaches masterly sermons to semi-empty benches, and learns without doubt the force of the injunction, "*Buy the truth and sell it not,*"—Prov. xxiii, 23; if the writer estimate him aright, he will buy, (according to his convictions,) at any price, and sell at none. The portion of Scripture, on which he sought to concentrate our attention, in the first place, by reading it, and subsequently by discoursing on it, was the twenty-fourth chapter of Luke, a portion to which the material heavens may be said to point, at the Easter festival, inasmuch as that day is the first Lord's day after the full moon which follows the vernal equinox: this fact involves the further consideration that the *Paschal moon was about full* when

"Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us," there would, consequently, be the less probability of "his disciples coming by night and stealing him away, and saying to the people, He is risen from the dead," Matt. xxvii, 64. With regard to the ministrations generally, on this occasion, it may be well to remark that a tone of unmistakeable reality pervaded them; comparatively slight trips of a doctrinal nature were outweighed by the general excellence of the service; the hymns sung were decidedly superior to the general order of such compositions; the most objectionable part of the service, in the judgment of the writer, was the anthem, which at best, appears to be the result of a compromise with the younger members of the community, a sop, so to speak, intended to gratify their love of display; by no stretch of imagination can such a performance be supposed to be acceptable to the Most High. Happily for John Wesley's repose, he is presumably out of reach of the echoes of the anthems, otherwise his flowing curls would be apt to be converted into something like porcupines' quills. The minister thought fit to read from that untrustworthy production, the revised version, and consequently, gave such of us as could perceive the shortcomings of its authors the opportunity to observe that instead of maintaining the idea of "foolishness" on the part of the apostles (Luke xxiv, 25), they would have done well to substitute the word "inconsiderate." There is a correspondence in the mode of expression, "and how he was known of them" (v. 35), with Eze. xx, 5, which will interest those who consider that "the Word of Jehovah which came (to Ezekiel) saying, Son of man," &c., is identical with that Word which was "in the beginning," which "was with God," and which "was God." The sermon was based on the 6th verse of Luke xxiv, "He is not here but is risen;" it commenced with the enquiries, How are we interested in this historical fact? What is the message which this blessed fact

brings us? These questions were answered by the preacher in the following manner.—I. The resurrection proves that Christ is the Son of God, and consequently indicates his claims and his character, Rom. i, 4, Ps. ii, 7, Acts, xiii, 33. We were referred to Matt. xii, 40, John ii, 19-22, and to Luke xxiv, 26, with regard to the Lord's *claims*, and it may be permissible to add that when any part of the twenty-four hours was touched in a reckoning, the Jews counted that as a whole day.

II. The resurrection proves that the sacrifice Christ offered was accepted, and consequently, that believers are accepted in Him, Rom. iv, 25, viii, 4, and I Cor. xv, 14, 17. (The writer has here rendered himself responsible for a *change of tense*.) III. The resurrection affords us a pledge of our own immortality—Christ has become our life—"Because I live, ye shall live also." Jno. xiv, 19, xx, 17, xi, 25. IV. The resurrection of our Lord has become a type of our own; we may expect to appear in his likeness, I Cor. xv, 20, 22, Phil. iii, 20, 21. V. The resurrection of Christ gives the assurance of the judgment of the world by Him, Acts xvii. 31. The reverend gentleman concluded by observing that the future judgment would be a cause of joy to a believer, and in so saying has the authority of the Apostle Paul to support him, "for we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad," II Cor. v, 10. An English peasant once remarked to the writer, in regard to the Bible, "It's no use putting a good dinner before a man, if he hasn't a good appetite," and the members of the Carlton Street Church cannot fail to regret that the "appetite" of so many of their neighbors is in a condition so vitiated as to listen to fictions entitled "Jeremiah's visit to Ireland," and possibly "Mahomet's flight to the moon," in preference to the solid, if familiar, verities from the lips of an

earnest and comparatively erudite minister.

LOCAL TRADITION RELATIVE TO THE CONQUEST OF JERICHO.

“The Bedawi began by relating that, not far from the *Tell-el-ithle*, there exist ruins, and that the ruins occupied the site of Jericho, the City of Brass, surrounded by seven walls of brass. The city had been in the power of the infidels, on whom the Imam Aly, son of Abou Taleb, made war. Aly mounted his horse Meimoun, rode round the city, and overthrew its walls by blowing on them, the ramparts falling of their own accord, stone by stone. After his combat with the infidels of the City of Brass, the day drew to an end, and the infidels were about to profit by the darkness to escape, when the Imam Aly cried out, addressing the sun, “Return, O blessed! return, O blessed!” Immediately, by the permission of God, the sun, which was in the west, and on the point of disappearing behind the mountain, placed itself once more in the east, in the place whence it had started, and since that time the mountain above which the sun was hanging at the moment of the miracle has been called “the croup of the turning.” It is the low chain running at the foot of Mount Quarantania. . . . The miracle having assured victory to Imam Aly, he exterminated all the infidels, and demolished the city from the foundations, the fugitives being entirely destroyed by wasps.” It may be well to observe, on account of those who, like Hume, object to miracles because they are “contrary to (their own) experience,” that the words “sun-light” and “moon-light” respectively meet the requirements of the Hebrew, in which case the narrative is reduced to what is termed “the language of phenomena”—of *appearances*.—From the Quarterly Statement of the Palestine Exploration Fund, April, 1874.

THE CATHOLIC APOSTOLIC CHURCH.

The pulpit of this Church was occupied by the Rev. E. J. W. Roberts, on the 9th inst.

The survivor of the twelve gentlemen who, in this nineteenth century, have styled themselves apostles, does not appear to object to his subordinates committing their essays to writing, hence the officiating minister on the present occasion communicated his sentiments from a manuscript; he related to the grand fundamental fact, in commemoration of which the festival of Easter has been celebrated throughout the Christian era; no intelligent person could listen to such a discourse without regretting that verities so sublime should be presented in terms so feeble; the sermon afforded evidence of lack of erudition, accompanied by no lack of self confidence and contradiction; the culminating idea which we were exhorted to reduce to practice, was that of *working in fellowship with apostles*, by which was intended the cultivating, harmonious relations with an elderly gentleman in London; Christ was said to be in these apostles, and we were advised to “put off all that would hinder the flow of God’s love to us” through this appointed channel; the nature of the channel may be perceived by reference to the previous number of “pulpit criticism.”

NO-PULPIT CRITICISM.

THE “MEETING ROOM” IN ALBERT STREET.

As there are eleven assemblies in Toronto and the environs, wherein worship is conducted without the aid of a stipendiary minister, it may be well to divert our attention from the occupants of pulpits, to some of the congregations which dispense with ministerial assistance, in the ordinary sense of such a term. Ecclesiastical dry-rot is a deeply rooted disorder; and as is the case with physical maladies, so there is reason to fear it is with spiritual; the doctors who endeavour to treat a disease, themselves sometimes succumb to it; we need not stay to diagnose the symptoms further than to conjecture that in all cases, they are traceable to “original sin,” and as such, are chronic, and practically incurable; indeed a high authority announces that the disease may be ex-

pected to "wax worse and worse," 2 Tim. iii, 13. There are many, in all parts of the world, who, in view of the contradiction, confusion and ruin of Christendom, have sought guidance in Scripture, as to the mode of worship, in the comparatively uncorrupted ages of the Church, and they consider that they need not look further than to such a passage as Acts xx, 7, to receive a clear intimation as to the practice of the primitive Church. They find it recorded that "on the first day of the week, (not on the seventh, according to the Puritans, who originated the blunder of confounding one day with the other,) when the disciples came together (neither to witness a theatrical performance, nor to listen to any "Gifted Giffillan," but) to break bread, Paul discoursed to them," etc. That this simple celebration of "the accomplished decree" was that which was uppermost in the mind of the Apostle Paul, they also gather from 1 Cor. xi, 20, where they read (R.V.) "When therefore ye assemble yourselves together, it is not possible to eat the Lord's supper, for in your eating," etc. and at ch. xvi, 2 of the same epistle, they read, "On the first of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store," etc.; they trace the practice of the Apostles backwards to the resurrection evening, (Jno. xx, 19), and both on that occasion, and on the following week (ch. v. 26) they find the disciples assembled; they therefore, like those who "were scattered abroad" after the martyrdom of Stephen, (Acts vii, 4), wait not for *ordination*, but on the other hand, go "everywhere preaching the word," and on the other hand, cast themselves on the far-seeing and most gracious promise, made to every "two or three" who, in the lapse of ages, should plead for its fulfilment. Unconscious imitation is apparently, as characteristic of children of a larger growth, as it is in the occupants of a nursery; and they who have had any experience of religious life

in the Eastern hemisphere, will not fail to recognise the same modes of expression, the same subdued and generally inaudible utterances in Albert street, which they have been accustomed to hear from the lips of John Nelson Darby, one of the founders of the sect styled "Brethren," and the originator of the schism which has separated them from others, who worship similarly, throughout the world. Even the manners of some of these people—sitting with uplifted face and closed eyes to wit—would appear to be contagious; whatever may be thought of the merits of vaccination in relation to physical malady it is probable that a judicious probe with a lancet would remedy this moral disorder; as these cases of sleep-waking are exceptional, the extension of the malady may probably be checked if treated in time. That all but universal substitute for knowledge, the relentless multiplication of words and threadbare sentiments, which too many can turn on at pleasure, is as distressing in an average Brethren's assembly as it is elsewhere; the hymns are exceptionally good, one of the best collections in the language, although they admit of improvement. The prayer of a prominent "Brother" impressed the writer as being more *conversational* and forced than devout, and not the better for a tinge of the rhetorical. The writer pitied his fellow-sufferers, the poor children who were constrained to be present, and the circumstance reminded him of one family in Toronto, whose parents, as he thinks judiciously, only send their children to a Sunday School. It would be difficult to devise any mode of worship more uninteresting, not to say repugnant, to children, than that ordinarily adopted by the people called Quakers and Brethren—The theory of the latter body is similar to that of the former, as to the power supposed to actuate the speakers, but the practice differs widely.