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Pulpit Criticism.

WITH

ANSWERS TO OBJECTIONS TO THE BIBLE,
A WEEKLY SHEET,
BY DAVID EDWARDS.

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GRACE CHURCH, ELM STREET.

A docile horse, persistently backing up a narrow lane, with a load of house-refuse behind him, may be regarded as symbolical of the two ex-Methodists, whose retrogressive performances, take place in Grace Church; and while we write, we are contemplating listening to a gentleman, who, by a process answering to that of the removal of the trap-stick, *shot his load of rubbish*, some three years ago; we need not stop to inquire with which of these gentlemen the sympathies of intelligent and upright men are enlisted; for even though he who is represented by the emancipated steed may have evinced some disposition to prance, such prancings under the circumstances, will probably be regarded as venial, rather than as mortal sins. We were somewhat amused on entering *Jackson Hall*, to perceive that this gentleman has been described by the limner as "Rev. Wm. Brookman;" the "Reverend" being, as we happened to know, a portion of the "rubbish" which he considered he had "shot" some time ago. The satisfaction we experienced in this latter visit, we shall endeavour to describe in the next number. With regard to Grace Church, and the philosopher of the North-West (of the table), it is to be feared that we cannot write otherwise than that self-contradiction is its most prominent characteristic; it bears this in *its name*, when viewed in the light of the proceedings which of late have won for it a bad pre-eminence; it bears it in *its constitution* for its "Rector" has been recently "inducted" to the charge of a building which will probably ere long, be offered for sale; the Church (in common with all similar Churches) bears contradictions many in its *Book of Prayer*; it bears them also on the persons and in the ministrations of its officiating "priests," unless the display of gold, and a purple and scarlet hood (which represents a medical degree) be not "pomps and vanities of this wicked world."

The first absurdity which struck us, in a recent visit to this establishment, was the pronouncing "the absolution" by its newly-fledged "priest;" as none but they who have received "priest's" orders are allowed to read this composition, the individual who "pronounced" it on this occasion, simply acted according to rule. These renegade Methodists are so singularly lacking in the capacity to read whatever lies before them in the vernacular tongue, that inasmuch as the incumbent is, notwithstanding this deficiency, *Professor of Homiletics* at Trinity College, it may be well if he "improve the occasion" of visiting the College, to receive a little instruction in the art of elocution; he can then impart the same economically to the assistant minister. The reading of the several portions of Scripture, without either the power to say anything about them (in passing), and without the requisite knowledge on the part of the ministers, is so essentially a matter of form, that we shall pass it in silence on the present occasion, and address ourselves to the pulpit deliverance.

Had we happened to meet any babies, we had decided to quit the church, rather than again witness the operation of sprinkling them; we were therefore the less likely to be edified by the information that "His Lordship, the Bishop," had "charged" that this farce should be performed during public worship; we are satisfied that it would puzzle "His Lordship" to find a single person in any congregation who does not regard it as a nuisance, and that he could hardly have issued a "charge" more detrimental to the cause he is supposed to have at heart.

With this performance in view however for the following week, we were inflicted with a discourse from the incumbent relating to it; the harangue was made to depend on Mark x. 14, "Suffer little children to come to me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God." One obvious remark which such a passage is calculated to call forth, when applied to the sprinkling of babies, is that the burden of proof rests with those who produce it for such a purpose; another observation which may be regarded as equally obvious, is that persons must be remarkably short of subjects on which to dilate, when they are perpetually harping on this antiquated craze; the rev. *harper* would appear also to have a pretty distinct impression that the common-sense of his hearers revolts against it, for he appeared not to have been so wrapt in devotion whilst engaged in the performance of this rite, but that he had observed "the amused expression on certain countenances which seemed to be ready to laugh if the children cried;" he also saw others "sitting bolt upright."

That mental process, styled "begging the question" is one with which this gentleman, in common with the generality of those of his order, is sadly familiar; hence we started with the assumption that we have two sacraments, of which, of course, infant baptism is one; in this so-styled sacrament, the infant is supposed to "receive remission of his sins," and yet we are told with regard to the other, that it is by the partaking of that *alone* that "we obtain remission." The rev. gentleman relieved himself of the usual amount of twaddle on this subject—"the mysterious operation of the regeneration of the child;" it "passed from death to life, from the power of Satan to God," it was "born again," "born after the Spirit, and received the power we need in order to resist the devil, etc.;" If so much virtue as that maintained by this advanced Methodist, attach to the operation of

sprinkling a baby, the consideration would appear to suggest an economical and a more effectual mode of reaching "China's millions," India's millions, etc., than has hitherto been adopted. We think that the warm-hearted Queen City of the West would cheerfully furnish these two renegade Methodists with a hose and all needful appliances wherewith to sprinkle China's millions, and thus reduce their theories to practice, and at the same time themselves "make room for better men."

This would-be teacher endeavoured to make some capital out of the Apostle Peter's declaration that—"the promise was to Israel and to their children," as if this expression did not relate to descendants; he cited Alford as an authority in regard to the Greek word for children, and was probably unaware that the late Dean's "usual carelessness and inaccuracy" is a fact well known on the other side the world. This gentleman is likewise unlikely to know that there is no record throughout the history of the first two centuries, of the baptism of a single infant; it was not, according to the late Dean Stanley, till three hundred years had rolled by, that we hear of the baptism of a baby. The Methodism of this ritualist cropped out as he informed us that "conversion is largely our own act;" he acknowledged that such a change is needed, because notwithstanding the alleged value of what he styles *baptism*, "baptismal grace will die out, and go for nothing;" it will be well that he should make this known among the millions of China, when he operates with the hose, otherwise there might be danger of their overestimating the value of the operation.

Such proceedings as those of these two gentlemen, while they teem with the elements of the ludicrous, are not the less to be deeply deplored inasmuch as they tend to obscure all that is sublime in connection with Christianity, and to bring it into contempt amongst such persons as assume that it is adequately represented by men of the stamp of Messrs. Lewis and McCarrol.

PERSONAL ANIMOSITY.

We read, on indisputable authority of one who "was a murderer from the beginning," and further that the same person "is a liar, and the father of it;" we cannot be said to entertain any personal animosity towards this gentleman, for we have not so much as seen him; is it necessary to observe that we are not in sympathy with *his character*? This gentleman is said to be the patron saint of lawyers, *i. e.*, of all lawyers except Messrs. Bigelow and Heighington, the gentlemen who respectively advocated the cause of the defendant, in the recent case of HUNTER *vs.* EDWARDS; that he is the patron of *the Archangel Michael*, there will be no room for doubt, on the part of those who read the article on "The Catholic Apostolic Church," in No. 13 of the First Series of PULPIT CRITICISMS. It is sometimes observed that this gentleman is "not so black as he is painted," and we live in the hope that the same remark may apply to a certain rev. friend of his, who cherishes (or professes to cherish) the impression that the dye with which he has lately been tinged is of too dark a hue. That His Impalpable Majesty is too much of a gentleman to utilize the name of *Her Majesty* in order to summon the artist who delineates him, to a Police Court, we are well assured, and we trust that either experience, or policy may induce his

rev. friend to exercise similar forbearance for the future. We think also that his rev. friend will discover that distance will lend enchantment to the view of an archangelic lawyer.

PIOUS FRAUDS ONLY.

No other than *pious frauds* can be treated by the Editor of PULPIT CRITICISM; the Editor of *Medical Criticism*, on the contrary, receives even chronic cases—pious or impious.

That indications should be afforded at a young people's improvement meeting, where dry goods can be obtained at advantageous rates, and *that* in connection with spiritual improvement, is in these days not remarkable, but it is possible to be unduly communicative on such a subject.


THE UNITARIAN CHURCH, JARVIS STREET.

Continued from No. 5.

For the minister of this Church personally, it may not be superfluous to remark that we entertain a cordial regard, but when we hear such phrases as "the promises of the Gospel," from the lips of a gentleman in his position, and such a petition as "visit the world in that mercy which thou hast so signally manifested in Jesus Christ," we cannot but know that whatever meaning such phrases may be supposed to convey to Unitarians, that meaning is wholly different to what the same words would convey to persons styled orthodox.

It had not fallen to our lot previously to hear portions of an Apostolic epistle read intermittently, but on this occasion we had the four concluding verses of Rom. xi. and the first verse of Ch. xii. and then Ch. xiii. The text on which the written harangue was based was Gal. vi. 3, and we cannot suppose that our readers would be edified were we to reproduce it; the name of the Lord Jesus was mentioned in it, but only as "Jesus Christ;" we heard also of Socrates, Shakespeare, John Howard, Florence Nightingale, Don Quixote, Dr Johnson, Emerson, Thomas Fuller, Burns, Mahomet, Mark Tapley, Disraeli, Antisthenes, Count D'Orsay, Lord Nelson, Napoleon, and Longfellow; it cannot be said therefore that we lacked variety. One of the petitions presented, took the form of requesting aid that we might know that the Almighty is not dead, and one of the statements to which we listened was that "there is great delight among the uncircumcised in witnessing the downfall of peacocks;" another was that there are persons who elect to strike into algebra and equations before they have mastered the rule of three; we also learned that "the world is pitiless of wind-bags."

We are free to confess that, in the interest of this gentleman, we should gladly see him otherwise occupied than in ostensibly ministering to the spiritual needs of his fellow mortals.

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

"MEDICAL CRITICISM," by the same author, may be procured at No. 4 Adelaide St. West. Price \$1.50 per annum.