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Pulpit Criticism.

WITH

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

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THE JAIL.

The interest of the Editor's visit to the above-named retreat was enhanced by the reflection that the hospitalities of the institution had so recently been proffered him by a prominent stock-jobber and revivalist. Far-seeing as that gentleman was in pouncing on a verdant and too confiding book-keeper, and subsequently in *paying the first call* on a trumpet-tongued revivalist, it did not appear to have occurred to the reverend gentleman that a caged editor can employ reporters, and can proclaim his penitence for his alleged offences with inconvenient frequency; he may however reflect in his lucid moments that "great men are not always wise." It will doubtless be consoling to him (and possibly to certain renegades of his own order) to learn that the Editor, as he approached the portal of the grim institution beyond the Don, was profoundly impressed with *the sign of the cross*, as it figures in the many windows, and in the portcullis-like inner gate of the edifice. When within the gate, he soon ascended to "the upper room" where prayer is wont to be offered, at the top of the building; the room is enlivened with emblazoned texts, the selection of which, in the judgment of the writer, it would be easy to amend. A little band of teachers of either sex soon assembled, a suitable prayer was offered by the superintendent and the subjoined him was sung.

" We come, Lord, to Thy feet,
On this Thy holy day :
O, come to us, while here we meet,
To learn, and praise, and pray.

Our many sins forgive,
The Holy Spirit send ;
And teach us to begin to live
The life which knows no end.

Lord, fill our hearts with love,
 Our teachers' labours own ;
 That we and they may meet above,
 To sing before thy throne.

Several of the teachers were from Grace Church, and we think we may safely predict that if they continue to deal with unmasked human nature, as they necessarily find it in the jail, they will be less distressed than has one of their pastors been, as to the misfit of his cassock ; we found, on leaving the "big institution" together, that we were likely to meet again at "our Bible-class," in the afternoon, and one may safely conjecture that the influence of the class had more to do with the teachings at the jail, than had the ministrations which flowed from the misfit above-named. Psalm ciii., was the portion of Scripture read during the service ; when one hears such words as those of its twelfth verse recited—"So far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us," one is apt to wonder to whom the person who reads them supposes they apply, and of what use such a petition as "forgive us our trespasses" is to such persons. The subject of the lesson was that suggested by the series of international lessons, viz., Acts vii., 54 to viii., 4. The teachers divided themselves into two companies, the men taking the male prisoners, and the women the females, and when we had sat together for about half an hour, the superintendent addressed a few earnest words to the combined sections of the school ; the leading thought of the address being that of what is styled "the golden text" for the day—"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life." One of the verses of a second hymn appeared to the writer to be so suitable to the gloom of a prison, that he must needs quote it—

I need thee blessed Jesus !
 I need a friend like thee ;
 A friend to warn and sympathize,
 A friend to care for me :
 I need the love of Jesus,
 To cheer me on my way,
 To guide my doubting footsteps,
 To be my strength and stay.

All persons who speak in public would do well to aim (so to say) at the opposite wall ; there would then be small chance of their dropping their voice to such an extent as to be inaudible. *Christian* persons should also bear in mind that fingers "unadorned adorn the most" ; if they will but endeavour to realize the effect of neglecting this axiom—the effect of it on persons who require *persuading* to become Christians, they will exchange their rings for "coppers" wherewith to feed the hungry. Our friend who addressed the prisoners collectively, took occasion to comment on the "falling asleep" of Stephen, as illustrative of what death is to every believer—a falling asleep *of the body* ; he concluded by appealing to his hearers as to whether they were like the Jews, arrayed against the Lord, or like Stephen, waiting to be for ever with him. While waiting for the arrival of the teachers, it may be well to observe that a *detachment* of "the 1st Canadian Corps" arrived at the jail, in quest of a *deserter*, who, through domestic discord and whiskey had passed from the discipline of the gospel to that of *the law*, and had quitted the jail only half an hour before his faithful comrades arrived.

"OUR BIBLE CLASS," CHESTNUT STREET.

"To the poor the good news is proclaimed."

To the writer's thinking, "Our Bible Class," while in some respects it is a happy designation, is not altogether free from objection; until the writer had the satisfaction of visiting this so-styled "class," he was not aware that spite of a heavy snow-storm, he should find a small church filled with it. The modesty which selected this title for what at least *has developed* into a highly beneficent agency, is quite intelligible, and it is to be hoped, is duly appreciated; but none save they who, as friends or as foes, are conversant with the working of the "class" would suppose that it involves the existence of some five branch instrumentalities—of a Young Mens' Literary and Debating Society, which assembles on Monday evenings; of a Ladies' Flower Mission*, which meets on Tuesday evenings. A choir constitutes one of the features of "the class," and this meets for practice on Wednesday evenings; on Thursday evenings, the Womens' Christian Temperance Society holds its meetings in the room (or church) of the "class," and on Friday evenings, a meeting of the Hope and Help Society is held, the object of which is perhaps sufficiently indicated by its name; no one can doubt that in the heart of a poor and long-neglected neighbourhood, there is urgent need for kindly hearts and helping hands.

"Our Bible Class" may therefore be regarded as a sort of *illustrated Bible*, and no one who visits it can well fail to perceive the secret of its usefulness; "the law of kindness" instead of that of commerce rules in the hearts of the whole party, and as one crosses the threshold, one meets with an illustration of this, afforded by the circumstance of a boy being placed at the door, who supplies all comers with a hymn-book; no sooner does one look towards the end of the building, than one is greeted by the unuttered "WELCOME," on the wall; and on leaving, every one receives another greeting from the warm heart and kind hand of the Superintendent.

Simple as all this is, and at least so far as the promoters of it are aware, in harmony with the spirit of the Bible, there are certain persons—objects of pity rather than of scorn—who are so eminently apostolical in their succession, as to say in effect—"Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy name, and he followeth not us; and we forbade him because he followeth not us." We have no doubt that they who, on the occasion of our visit, had gathered round them former inmates of the Central Prison, women of the class known as "abandoned," and others whom the love of whiskey had reduced to the possession of a bundle of straw—that they whose moral influence can produce such results, when they find themselves the objects of the jealousy and calumny of mere place-holders, will so far emulate the spirit of their Divine Master as to "*labour, working with their own hands* ; being reviled (to), bless; being persecuted (to), suffer it; being defamed (to),

* It may be well to explain that the object of this very considerate effort is to arrange flowers in bouquets, and convey them either to the sick beds in private houses, or to those in hospitals for adults or children; none but they who have known what it is to receive flowers when unwell, and in a sick-room, can adequately appreciate so welcome a boon; ladies who happen to have flowers wasting their sweetness on the desert air of their conservatories, will turn them to good account by sending them or BY TAKING THEM to the Mission Room.

intreat, etc." (1 Cor. iv. 12, 13). They will thus commend their course to God and men, and bear favorable contrast to those Ecclesiastical corpses whose principal business it is to aim at the exercise of "authority" which they do not possess.

Had some of these enshrouded *corpses* been present at the meeting of "Our Bible Class" on this occasion, there was at least one in the assembly who might have been heterodox enough to have echoed the words of Stephen, and have said—"Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in your hearts and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye."

We hope to treat of the teaching of this class, in some detail, in the ensuing number.

GOOD FRIDAY.

The Toronto Clerical Association was safely delivered of the following resolution on the 12th inst.:—"That the members of this Association desire to impress upon their congregations the duty and importance of religiously observing Good Friday, refraining from attendance at entertainments given in any place on that holy day; also the desirability of abstaining from any entertainments immediately after holy week, which involve such preparation as would necessarily interfere with the devotions of that solemn season."


By-and-bye we may expect to hear of these gentlemen observing the festival of *Corpus Christi*, unless during the fasting season they may happen to learn that an inspired Apostle has said—"Ye observe days, and months, and times, . . . I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed on you labour in vain."—Gal. iv. 10, 11.

CAVE OF ADULLAM.

A leader of a Bible-class is a person whom one is entitled to expect would be exceptionally jealous of the rights attaching to "his neighbour's landmark;" yet sad to say, there is such a person, within the limits of Toronto, who retains his hold on property, now guarded by a fence, which belongs to a lady who was once wealthy, but is now obliged to work for her bread.

One consequence of a College career, and especially that of a sectarian college, is to render the graduates for the most part entirely satisfied that they "are the people, and wisdom will die with them."

It is not true that the Rev. Dr. Castle has joined the Toronto Oil Company; and it is unlikely that so judicious a Company should overstock themselves.

 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.