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Pulpit Criticism.

A WEEKLY SHEET.

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GRACE CHURCH,

ELM STREET.

The service at this church was conducted by the Rev. J. McCarroll, M.D., on the morning of the 14th inst. Names, in certain cases, would appear to have been given in irony; it is therefore not wholly remarkable that in the Church of grace, what are termed the doctrines of grace are not preached; two Methodist ministers have elected to preach methodist doctrines therein, from an Episcopal pulpit, and with reference to them, we need only echo the words of the Lord himself, "verily they have their reward." The gravity of the writer was jeopardized by the highly un-biblical incident of the vigorous tugging at a milk-bottle, on the part of one of five infants, which had been brought to the church, in order to be submitted to the rite of baptism; this rite was celebrated after the reading of the second lesson. The writer may safely affirm that its administration during the service, would, in the opinion of all present, have been more honored in the breach, than the observance; with as little hesitation may he declare that if the object of those who are responsible for the conduct of public worship, be, to increase

the rampant infidelity of the age, they could hardly effect their purpose more surely than by reading such a service as that for the 'baptism of infants' publicly. The fervour which the ex-Methodist contrived to throw into this eminently Romish service, might lead the unwary to conclude that he believed it. It is well for him, the writer was not examining chaplain to the Bishop who received him, when he renounced "the errors of methodism," for the *beauties of Rome*, as represented by this "occasional service." The same lack of apprehension of the meaning of the passage "God of God," etc., in the Nicene creed, which displayed itself in St. James' Cathedral, was manifested by the officiating minister on this occasion. With regard to the sermon which was supposed to be connected with Heb. xi, 23-26, it was obvious that the gentleman who delivered it, did not perceive that there was anything anomalous in attempting to descant on the excellence of Moses as exhibited in "choosing to suffer affliction," etc., and flourishing a gold ring and other adornments, than those of "a meek and quiet spirit," the while. A tol-

erably fluent delivery will lead many to believe that a sermon is what they style a good one, but when one reflects on the unbelief, which anyone who mingles much in society must know to be widely extended, it is impossible not to perceive that something very different from Mrs. Alexander's poetry is needed, if the pulpit is not to sink to a lower level of contempt than that in which it is held at the present time. Reality of conviction on the part of the preacher, is a matter of prime necessity; but when one finds a man telling us that Moses might have been expected to be 'a child of fear,' rather than 'a child of faith,' and the ground of the expectation is traced to his experience of the crocodiles, while floating in his bulrush ark, one is apt to question the sanity of the man who promulgates such a sentiment. The tears of the crocodiles of to-day would doubtless swell the volume of the Nile, as they learned the libellous intelligence of their ancestors having stricken terror into the heart of Moses, as he lay, rocked in his bulrush cradle, among the lotus-leaves; happily for the security of the Rev. J. McCarroll, there is not so much as a stuffed member of this injured family within the precincts of the Zoo. It is probable that the herald king-at-arms would, in view of this brilliant achievement of genius, on the part of the reverend gentleman, grant him the privilege of adding crocodiles *rampant*, as supporters, to his coat of arms. The evidence of this gentleman's incompetence for the office he is allowed to hold, was but, too manifest; Moses, we were told 'became a slave,' 'had been offered almost a crown,' 'being a prophet he could have foretold suffering,' etc., etc. It is time this gentleman understood that the circumstance of a man being a prophet caused him to predict only what the Almighty empowered him to foretell, and that we have no warrant for affirming that a prophet was more privileged than other men, in forecasting his own destiny, apart from God-given light thereon. That the

prophets "enquired and searched diligently" into the meaning of their own utterances, is evidence enough that they were actuated from without as to what they uttered. The burlesque styled "blessing" was duly performed at this church, and the silly people, each because the other did, no doubt, stood to receive it as a kind of mesmeric pass, from one uplifted hand. One is reminded by all this, of that remarkable arrangement in the kingdom of nature, which results in spiders living at the cost of flies, pike on minnows, hawks on chickens, and "grievous wolves" who do not spare the flocks.

EVENING SERVICE.

As it was announced in the morning, that a confirmation service would be held in the evening, at the above-named church, the writer felt constrained to be present on the occasion. He was amused to perceive how pliantly the two clerical ex-Methodists, who doubtless exhibited all the virtues apart from 'the grace of confirmation,' when adorning the Methodist fraternity, participated in this link with the Church of Rome. At a time when we are forcibly reminded of the impressive words, "*when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?*" one may be permitted to observe that there are not a few who regard what is termed "the baptism of infants," and "confirmation" as a fiction in two volumes, and considering the extent to which ecclesiastical force-pumps are brought to bear on these occasions, it is worthy of note that but six male candidates had been induced to present themselves, while of 'silly women' there were all but six times the number; men are notoriously less afflicted with sentiment, than are 'the weaker vessels,' and this, as might be expected, was '*a matter of deep regret*' to the former bishop of Seaton Village. In due course, it devolved on 'the Lord Bishop of Toronto,' to open his mouth in what, to some of us were decidedly "dark sayings." His Lordship, whose memory for certain apostolic injunctions (1 Tim. ii. 9; 1 Pet. iii. 3.) would appear

to be other than tenacious, in addressing the candidates who were about to 'renounce the pomps and vanities of this wicked world,' indulged in some acrobatic feats of argument; it is well that the fortunes of no client were dependent on his Lordship's forensic skill. At one moment the candidates were 'the children of God' (and the catechism had told them that before) and yet they were about to enter into 'a covenant of sonship'; they 'desired to be the children,' yet 'they were the children' of the Most High, 'God had adopted them,' etc.; they had used the Lord's prayer, and in the 'general confession' provided for them in the prayer-book, they had been accustomed to say, 'Almighty and most merciful Father,'—all this was supposed to be demonstrative evidence that they were the children of the High and Lofty One. The Bishop could not be expected to reconcile the use of the Lord's prayer with that teaching of the Apostle which conveys the truth that believers "*have been forgiven all their trespasses,*" Col. ii. 13. He appealed to the narrative which records the blessing of Ephraim and Manasseh by Jacob, (Gen. xlviii) and to that recorded in the eighth chapter of the Acts, as affording confirmation of his tenets; but as even Wild has failed to provide Manasseh with a godmother, we are obliged, of course, in the profoundest humility, to enquire how Jacob could confirm 'the lads,' without releasing their godmother from their 'solemn responsibility.' Truly the faith in lawn sleeves, college caps, and crimson hoods must be of the profoundest character if the packed congregation which gaped at this performance, could imbibe such drivelling as this! As regards the supposed parallel between the performance in Grace Church, and the narrative in the Acts, it may be well to observe that there was evidence in the latter case that the Holy Spirit was given, for 'when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money,' and Peter's characteristic reply was 'Thy money perish with thee,

because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money,' etc., vs. 18, 20. This incident recalls to the writer's memory the day when a supposed successor of the apostle was not so discourteous to himself as to express any desire that his money might perish with him, but on the contrary, kindly relieved him of four British guineas, in consideration of his Lordship's little attention, in laying his Episcopal hands on his head. In that case, *although the money was given the Spirit was not*; in the case of the apostle, *the Spirit was given, but the money was not*, and such of us as are left to 'the uncovenanted mercies' of the Almighty, will be prone to conclude that spiritual gifts, and those of money are usually bestowed in inverse proportion. It must suffice to observe that the Bishop relieved himself of much Episcopal twaddle on this occasion, but instead of commenting further on it, the writer will invite his attention to three facts, which, if not recognized by his Lordship at the present time, will be when it is 'too late'—(1) Infidelity abounds on every hand. (2) This unbelief has assumed the marshalled form of a chartered association of advocates of 'free thought,' for the whole Dominion. (3) The conviction of thoughtful persons of all shades of opinion is, that no instrumentality is so potent in abetting unbelief, as the professing churches. A counterfeit coin derives its pernicious character from its measure of resemblance to the true; it cannot therefore be surprising that if we look above, for the estimate, in which all this is held, we find it recorded in one brief, but divinely emphatic utterance,—*"I will spue thee out of my mouth,"* Rev. iii. 16. One false statement is wont to involve another, and this criticism is written in the full consciousness that the teaching respecting what is styled 'confirmation,' has become a sequence of another erroneous dogma, but the writer will content himself with observing that the transparent fallacies produced on the 14th inst., by the Bishop of Toronto, in defence of the practice of 'confirmation,'

prove by default, its utter untenability, and so far as they go, could not fail in their tendency, to shake the confidence of any reflecting person in such portions of his Lordship's statements as happened to be characterized by veracity.

CORRESPONDENCES.

[Continued from No. 17.]

Matt. xxiv. 9 etc.

"Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you, and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake; and then shall many be offended and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.

"By your endurance preserve your lives (or souls), Luke."

"But immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from the heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken, and there shall be signs in the sun, and moon, and stars, and upon the earth distress of nations in perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; men fainting for fear and expectation of the things coming on the world, for the powers of the heavens shall be shaken, Luke xxi.; and then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in the heaven, and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming upon the clouds with power and great glory."

Rev. vi. 9-17.

"And when he opened the fifth seal, I saw, under the altar, the souls of those that had been slain because of the word of God, and because of the testimony which they held; and they cried with a loud voice, saying, 'How long, O Master, the holy one and true, dost Thou not judge and take vengeance for our blood from those that dwell on the earth?' and there was given unto them severally a white robe, and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until both their fellow-servants and their brethren, that were about to be killed as they also had been, shall have been completed.

"And I saw when He opened the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the whole of the moon became as blood; and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when shaken by a mighty wind; and the heaven was separated from its place as a scroll when it rolleth itself together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places, and the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the chief captains, and the rich men, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and freeman hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains; and they say to the mountains and the rocks, 'fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him who sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, because the great day of his wrath hath come, and who is able to stand?'"

As the Book of Revelation was written subsequently to the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, and the visions of the sixth chapter correspond with the predictions of Matt. xxiv, it follows that the latter chapter relates to a destruction of Jerusalem, which is future.