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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.

The circumstance of the writer finding himself within reach of Grace Church, although intending to have been present at another service, accounts for his presence in a Church which of late has become remarkable for the *lack* of that which is expressed in the Church's designation. Whether the rector may be seeking to counterbalance the loss of spiritual power which his Church has lately sustained, by a display of Ecclesiastical dignitaries, it is not worth while to enquire, but the fact remains that we were addressed by a Bishop in the morning, and a Dean was announced to hold forth in the evening. From our own point of view, the principal difference between a bishop and "the inferior clergy" appears to consist in the greater cost and display of the "dry goods" worn by a bishop when officiating in public; assuredly had we known that such an infliction was in store for us, as the listening to that tissue of absurdity,

superstition, and contradiction, embodied in the baptismal service, the Bishop and his "apron" would have been left to other wearers of such articles; it is well for Archbishop Laud and the Jesuit who is said to have assisted His Grace in conducting the service, that they were at a safe distance on that occasion, notwithstanding we were invited to "join heartily" in the performance. Happily the three children who were submitted to the rite of "baptism," were unconscious of the unkindness of their god-parents in promising that they should be doomed to "hear sermons," otherwise we might have had an outcry which would effectually have precluded the possibility of listening to the Lord Bishop of Niagara. It would be interesting to learn from the Lord Bishop, or from any of "the inferior clergy," in what manner the passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea (see the Baptismal service) figured the sprink-

ling of these infants ; possibly some of the briny spray sprinkled the chosen people, but of this we do not read ; it would be easy to multiply such suggestions without limit, but it will be well to content one's self with the remark that persons' minds must presumably be but little occupied with the subjects, in relation to which, they are supposed to teach. The service was read by Rev. Mr. Lewis, and to judge by the numerous blunders made by the reverend gentleman in the course of it, he has paid more attention probably to the consideration whether he should occupy a position north of the table, west, or nor'-west by north, than to the claims of elocution ; possibly the rev. gentleman's mind was distracted by these profound considerations, while he was stumbling over the proper names of Scripture ; it certainly becomes necessary to make some apology for a " Professor of homiletics " when, in reading Phil. ii, 7, we hear " and was made in the likeness of sin," instead of " in the likeness of men." To add a word about the hymns, it seems only necessary to observe with regard to one of them—" O day of rest and gladness," etc., that apostrophising a day is a remarkable mode of praising one's maker ; the hymn 256 however, with the exception of " Light of light "—introduced as a rhythmical necessity, and displaying ignorance on a point which was dwelt on in our first criticism—with this serious exception, the hymn is a good one. The Bishop selected the text of his sermon from 1 Cor. ix, 24, the passage being " So run that ye may obtain ; " His Lordship proceeded to explain that the Apostle, in the passage in question, was referring to the Isthmian games, which were held every fourth year on the Isthmus of Corinth ; he remarked that the period of training for these games extended over ten months, and that when the day of the race had arrived, the competitors were summoned by sound of trumpet : they were restricted to " pure

Greeks, of irreproachable character ;" these Greeks presented themselves in flowing robes which, prior to their commencing the race, were exchanged for tightly-fitting garments ; they were said to have kept their eye on the judge, and to have striven for a prize, which consisted of a pine-wreath ; the Bishop further drew on his " Greek authors " for the story of Atalanta, the swiftest of runners, whose admiration for her own skill led her to decline the advances of all suitors who could not outstrip her in the race ; many adventurous youths had, of course, sought the hand of Atalanta, but (unlike the youths of the present age) they were not fast enough ; one however, (whom the snobs of to-day closely resemble) was canny enough, while competing with the nimble object of his affections, to throw down three golden apples ; the rapid Atalanta contrived to pick up the first and second, without sacrificing her supremacy, but she was stumped by the third, lost her race, and gained her canny suitor ; all this was sought to be applied to persons who were supposed to occupy a position corresponding to that believing body in the city of Corinth, whom the Apostle addresses as " sanctified in Christ Jesus, elected saints," etc. The Bishop omitted all mention of that unworldly race, and the scattering of " golden apples," which is said to have characterized it, which was rewarded with an imaginary tiara styled " Niagara." His Lordship appealed, however, to the sentimentality of that section of the congregation, for whom, when officiating in St. George's, he had prayed that the Almighty would " release them from their sins " (see Baptismal service) ; the transgressions of that period of their career would necessarily be restricted to " muling and puking " at midnight, and perhaps giving undue employment to the washerwoman ; but the Bishop had also prepared the same individuals for confirmation, and administered to them their first com-

munion; it is not surprising therefore that with the knowledge of human nature which even a Bishop of the Episcopal Church cannot fail to possess. His Lordship should have suggested that either "golden apples" or forbidden fruit in a no less attractive form had possibly made havoc with confirmation vows, etc. The Bishop endeavored to make these poor people believe that they had been "born of water and the Spirit," but probably himself cannot suppose that such an operation as being sprinkled at a font was what the Messiah enjoined on Nicodemus, John iii, 5. This, at any rate, was what he taught, and he added that if we sinned, the crown is not for us "until we come back and become members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven." Inasmuch as these words are quoted from the catechism, and are the statements put into the mouths of children, in relation to what is supposed to have been accomplished for them when they were brought to the font, it follows that the Bishop advocated a repetition of the sprinkling whenever persons should be consciously "guilty of sin." It would be waste of time to enlarge further on the teaching of this gentleman, than to observe that he informs the congregation that "every good gift of theirs, every kind act, and every manifestation of sympathy in this world, would avail them in securing a favored position in the next." Had Archbishop Lynch been present, he would probably have patted his *protege* on the back, and said, Bravo Niagara, I'll speak a word for you the next time I visit the Vatican—Any more of those apples, I wonder?

Owing to the exceptional nature of the two publications, "Pulpit Criticism," and "Medical Criticism," Mr. Edwards feels it necessary to request such of his subscribers as, he has reason to believe, desire that either or both these publications

should be continued, to endeavor to increase the number of subscribers; Mr. B.'s strength is taxed to the utmost, day by day, not in regard to the literary work, but especially in the discouraging work of canvassing; but for this inevitable part of his undertaking the literary and other labor would be light.

THE BIBLE CLASS.
SHAFTESBURY HALL.

Without pretending to endorse all one may hear at such a meeting as that above indicated, the writer has no doubt that far more light on the Bible, and more warmth of heart in relation to its teaching, is manifested at the meetings which are held in the afternoon of each Lord's day at Shaftesbury Hall, than is to be found in most of the Churches; the object of the meetings is to elucidate, so far as possible, such portions of Scripture as have been arranged for reading in the Sunday Schools of the world, by certain sects which have united for that purpose. The portion with which the class was occupied on the afternoon of the 8th inst., was Mark xiv, 12-21. The first feature of the proceedings that struck the writer as good, was the practice of the teacher and the class reading the verses alternately; this necessarily helps to sustain the interest of the class in the selected portion. The first thought on which Mr. Briggs (who conducted the class) dwelt, was that of the privilege of entertaining the Son of God, and the ceremonial necessity of removing all leaven from the house, prior to the celebration of the passover. Mr. B. is aware that "leaven" is uniformly treated in Scripture as symbolical of evil, he therefore applied the practice of removing the leaven, to the necessity there was of any of his hearers "ceasing to do evil," prior to "learning to do well" at the feet of the Redeemer. Mr. B. also adverted to the connected narrative of the previous week's lesson,

that of the breaking of the alabaster vase of oil of spikenard, and pouring it on the Lord's head; he referred to the millions in all parts of the globe, who, owing to the arrangement of the scheme of international lessons, were, within a limited period, occupied with the same portion of the sacred narrative, and treated this, in relation to Christ's estimate of the act, and his declaration that "wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done, shall be spoken of for a memorial of her." Mr. B. also contrasted the love which relinquished the "very precious" vase for the sake of the Lord, with that comparatively cold, and calculating selfishness which is content to bestow mites on him, while lavish in ministering to individual luxury. The marked enumeration of the concluding days of the Lord's career, corresponding as it does with the period of setting apart the typical lamb, was a feature of the narrative which was not overlooked, hence Mr. B. connected the events of the lesson with the Thursday of what is termed the Passion week. Speculations as to the destiny of Iscariot, like all speculations of that character, appear to the writer to be decidedly idle; of how much importance is it what any man may happen to think on the subject, when the only authoritative words we have relating to it are that "good were it for that man if he had never been born." Mark xiv, 21. The attention of the class was invited to the prominence occupied by the paschal festival, from the time of its institution, as recorded in Ex. xii, to its fulfilment, when "Christ our pass-over was sacrificed for us." In illustration of this, we were referred to Numb. ix, 4, 5, 13; Josh. v, 10; 2 Kings xxiii, 21;

2 Ch. xxx, 1; Ez. xlv, 21. The authenticity of the narrative—the fact that the children of Israel were treated as a pardoned people, in consequence of their slaying the typical lamb—and the fact that they necessarily recognized the veracity of this, was applied by Mr. B. to Christian believers, very few of whom (ministers included) apprehend that their position is that of "acceptance in the beloved," Eph. i, 6. The omniscience of the Lord, as illustrated by the command, "Go ye into the city, and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water," necessarily formed an interesting feature of the lesson; The "large upper room furnished and prepared," affords a further illustration or the same prescience; that no remuneration was either demanded or offered for the room, at a season when Jerusalem would be crowded to excess, is one of the features of the narrative, to which it was well that attention should have been invited. The remarkable circumstance of the local nearness of Judas to the Lord, regarded in relation to his moral distance from him, is one which is calculated to impress all men with the fruitlessness of what may be termed religious advantages, apart from the action of an invisible Power. The lesson concluded with an exhortation to "purge out the old leaven," etc., that the hearers might become "a new lump" practically, and hence render their lives in harmony with that "unleavened" position, which, if believers, is their privilege to hold theoretically, as regarded from on high, 1 Cor. v, 7. This order of teaching, we may briefly remark, is unknown in the majority of pulpits, but is sufficiently manifest, one may suppose, in the Word of God.

MEDICAL CRITICISM, by the same Author, sold at Hawkins & Co.'s. 67 Yonge Street. Price, 50 Cents.