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Pulpit Criticism:

WITH

ANSWERS TO OBJECTIONS TO THE BIBLE. ▶

A WEEKLY SHEET.

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THE METHODIST CHURCH.

SHERBOURNE STREET.

The service at this church was conducted by the Rev. S. J. Hunter, on the morning of the 16th inst. In proportion to persons' ignorance are they willing to follow the leadership of blind guides; hence the attractiveness and the lucre attaching to the vocation of blind guide; lack of perceptive power is a question of degree, and in whatever measure that lack characterizes the gentleman above named, there can be no doubt that he is considerably ahead, in point of diction, of the majority of the community he represents. The service, as a whole, deserved to be described as refreshing, and with a passing commendation of the first two hymns, we will divide the description of it by commenting first, on what the officiating minister did not say, and then on what he did. As the thirty-seventh psalm was the portion of Scripture selected for reading, and as it is easy to understand why such portions are read without comment, we will endeavour to find something to say

on the subject-matter of the psalm; the opening prohibition should be read, "Be thou not angry because of evil doers;" at the seventh verse we should have "Be thou not angry on account of him who prospereth in his way," and at the eighth, "Be thou not angry (which is) only for doing evil," i.e., anger is a frequent cause of evil; this triple deprecation of anger probably has special reference to that manifestation, on the part of Jewish saints in the future "time of Jacob's trouble," (Jer. xxx. 7, Matt. xxiv. 13). The word rendered "saints" in ver. 28. is restricted to Israelitish saints. "Feed (thyself) with truth" conveys a widely different thought to the "verily thou shalt be fed," of the third verse. The seven encouragements Godward are obviously matters of design. "Trust in Jehovah" (v.3) "Delight thyself also in Jehovah" (v.4.) "Commit thy way to Jehovah" (v.5.) "Trust also in him" (v. 5.) "Rest in Jehovah" (v. 7.) "Wait patiently for him" (v. 7.) "Wait on

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Jehovah, and keep his way" (v. 34.) The word "judgment" occurring as it does in vs. 6, 28, and 30, must give place to "rectitude" in order that the several passages containing it may become intelligible; the similarity of the modes of expression of the sacred writers is worthy of notice, and of this we have more than one example in this psalm; the first is all but a repetition of the first verse of the psalm, and occurs in the Proverbs of David's son, see xxiv. 19; the second is the correspondence between Jer. li. 10, and the sixth verse of the psalm. As nothing is more remote from realization at present, than the prospect of "the meek inheriting the earth," (v. 11.) it is, or ought to be, manifest that this psalm points to the period indicated in corresponding words, in Matt. v. 5. The correspondence of the prediction that "the Lord (Jesus, as indicated by the type of the title 'Lord' v. 13,) shall *laugh* at the wicked," with the only other statement of the kind, at Ps. ii. 4, is another element of interest. "Upright conduct," would be an improvement on "conversation," in the fourteenth verse; our phrase "shivered to atoms" would be the counterpart of the Hebrew word, tamely rendered "broken," in the 15th and 17th verses. The heirloom of the earth instead of "the land" (v. 34.) is the heritage of Israel, but this was not apprehended by the translators of the psalms. It must suffice to add that this is one of eight psalms which in whole or in part are acrostic. It could be gathered from this gentleman's prayers, in common with those of his ministerial brethren generally, that he has not sufficiently imbibed the teachings of the Apostle Paul to know that the sins of believers *are forgiven* (Col. ii. 13); this teaching of the Apostle necessarily involves the principle of *gradation* in instruction on divine subjects, and that is precisely what they who unconsciously derive their teaching from the Puritans have to learn. The reverend gentleman's supplications "for the world," characteristic

as it was of the system he represents, contrasted strikingly with the recorded petition of One whose authority it may be presumed he will acknowledge, who, according to John xvii. 9- "prayed not for the world." Possibly the prayer for the world is traceable to "enlarged views," "new lights," etc. We now come to the views enunciated in the sermon, the text of which was Matt. x. 29, 30. "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered." That confusion of ideas which finds its expression in the phrase "Christian countries" was early broached, and is itself traceable to a lack of apprehension of the Almighty's estimate of these countries; that estimate may be obtained by reference to the prophecy of Daniel; we have there the successive kingdoms delineated by a divine hand; the kingdoms to which governmental power has been entrusted from the time that it was transferred from the hands of the chosen people; it is remarkable that the first three, Assyria, Persia, and Greece were of such a nature that animals could be found in the kingdom of nature to symbolize them; hence the lion which the pride of Assyria selected as a fitting representative of its prowess and strength, *the Almighty selects* to depict its ferocity and bloodthirstiness; the bear adequately symbolizes Persia, and the graceful leopard, the kingdom of Greece; but when we come to *that kingdom* which is the patriarch of the "Christian countries" of our own day, when we reach the Roman kingdom, the Lord goes beyond the limits of nature in order to describe it, *according to his own estimate*; we have therefore, through the instrumentality of Daniel's vision, the fourth or Roman kingdom described as "a beast, terrible, and strong, and oppressive; and it had great iron teeth; it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with its feet; and it was diverse from all

the beasts which were before it ; and it had ten horns." Such is the moral picture as portrayed by the Almighty himself of that which corrupted Christianity described as "the kingdom of God," "Christian countries," "the Church of this country and of that," which Church is supposed to embrace all the sprinkled inhabitants of the several countries; we live at a time in which that which is intrinsically evil is styled good, and that which is essentially good is evil spoken of; we need never be surprised therefore at any ecclesiastical summersaults, while "topsy turvy" is the order of the day. Our reverend illuminator described four conditions of mind with regard to the providence of God, which prevail in this "Christian country," one of which denied its existence entirely; he drew a succession of pictures illustrative of the need of its recognition, one of which presented a distracted widow on the lake shore; she was supposed to have just received tidings of the loss of husband and sons in a hurricane, and a comforter was depicted as assuring her that the catastrophe was in entire harmony with natural law, from which assurance she necessarily derived small consolation; another comforter assured her that "behind this frowning providence God hid a smiling face." A second picture delineated a man sitting behind a tree, and having his attention directed to the chirping of a cricket, while he went aside to look after the cricket, a cannon ball swept away the tree; a third sketch depicted a Baptist minister in the States, who in view of an approaching storm, betook himself to his knees; the tornado was said to have swept houses and trees before it, with the single exception of the homestead of the minister. The mysteries of providence were happily illustrated by the warp and woof of a weaving-loom, which, when viewed on the *wrong* side presents nothing but confusion, while on the right, all is order and beauty; the wheels and springs of a watch as requiring a governing

hand before they will subserve their purpose, were brought into requisition as further illustrations, and the inscrutable subject was also compared to a torrent which after pursuing its course through mountain defiles, is occasionally lost to sight in a cavern, only to reappear in some rich valley. In like manner, the river of God's love was said to hide itself at times behind his frowning providences, only to reappear "amidst the flowers of a loftier faith." There is one circumstance of exceptional interest attaching to this Church, and with the mention of that we must conclude this notice; the application of the telephone to the pulpit enables a bed-ridden lady to participate in the services, and no one can doubt, as all will hope, that in exact proportion as she may realize the permissive hand of God in her affliction, will the weight of her trial be removed, and assured blessing supersede it.

A VISIT TO "THE HAVEN" OF THE PRISON GATE MISSION.

There is not a little good accomplished in Toronto, without the aid of man-made ministers, or operatic anthems, and the institution above designated affords an interesting illustration of the fact; the name of but one gentleman styled "reverend" figures amongst those who are actively connected with this work of rescue, and he is habitually occupied with the wretched and degraded, rather than with the elaboration of popular essays. As the writer is of opinion that his readers will be more interested in some of the results of the united prayer and labor of various kinds which have been put forth in relation to this undertaking; than in the religious ministrations to which he listened on the last Lord's day, he will content himself with observing with regard to the said ministrations that he deems it highly desirable that they should be characterized

by tenderness, rather than by terrorism, for when men adopt the latter tone, they are apt to dilate on a subject of which they know nothing, and to harden their hearers into a spirit of rebellion, rather than to soften and subdue. The primary object of the Prison Gate Mission has been to provide a lodging for female prisoners on the morning of their discharge from the Toronto jail. Since the opening of the Mercer Reformatory, this original object of "The Haven" forms but a small part of the work undertaken by its promoters. A haven, as the name implies, is but a temporary refuge, but the fact remains that during the period in which many women have availed themselves of the kindly aid afforded by the haven, not a few have found their whole being transformed from a condition of degradation and shame, to one of jubilant consciousness of acceptance with God, and the sympathetic regard of those around them. No "cast iron rules" enthrall this institution, for the pliable bond of Christian love has superseded them; hence we gather that they who govern are guided by the peculiar circumstances of each applicant for their aid, and the accommodation available. No friendless woman or girl has been refused admission. "if there has been a corner in which she could be made comfortable." Two or three beds on the work-room-floor was no unusual sight during the winter months. One of the many cheering features of this institution consists in the fact of former inmates, who are now in situations, contributing, and inducing others to contribute to a building fund, by means of which, the guardians of "The haven" expect to double its means of accommodation. Up to the first of May of the present year there have been 328 admissions and re-admissions, forming

a total of 353. Of this number, 288 have been young women, and 65 infants; many of these have been sheltered for several months, and all have been brought under healthy moral and religious influences. Ninety-three women, admitted during the year which terminated in May last, were under twenty years of age, twenty were under the age of eighteen. Among the records of successes, which no one would expect to be uniform, occurs the case of M. W., she is described as having been one of the most depraved women in Toronto, the mother of seven (of course illegitimate) children, all of them scattered except the babe she held in her arms, when she went to "the haven." She remained about nine months under that hospitable roof, behaved well, enjoyed the religious services, and gave evidence of an entire change of character; the old, hard lines are said to be fading from her face, the love of the Lord beams from her eyes, and her whole life is devoted to adorning the doctrine of God her Saviour. It is no uncommon occurrence for as many as thirty of the former inmates to make their way to "the haven" when religious services are being held there; they have an incidental opportunity on these occasions of unburdening their hearts to their former matron, and return to the discharge of their duty, strengthened and refreshed by the instrumentalities of the service, and the kindly counsel of the superintendent. Gratitude, like love, is prone to laugh at locksmiths, otherwise it could hardly be that persons so situated as these young women could have raised, as they did, a purse of \$25 in order to present to one of the friends who had been accustomed to minister religious instruction to them, on that friend leaving the city.

A half sheet entitled "MEDICAL CRITICISM," the chief aim of which will be to prevent suffering, and to prolong life, will be issued weekly, from the 2nd of September, to the 30th of December; edited by David Edwards, and sold at Hawkins & Co.'s, 67 Yonge Street, price 50 cents.