

June 24th. 1862.

40
No. 124
St. M

Pulpit Criticism.

ST. MATTHIAS CHURCH.
STRACHAN STREET.

The service at this Church was conducted by two clergymen on the 18th inst., the Rev. Richard Harrison, and the Rev. Charles Darling. A medical man, when dealing with lurking physical malady, is wont to aspire to throw it out to the surface, and the patient—Toronto is perhaps to be congratulated that in some degree at least the Ecclesiastical disorder styled ritualism has found its way to her extremities; in the East, the disease appears in a comparatively mild form, and its principal practical issue consists in distressing nervous mothers who have been bereft of unsprinkled babes, by assuring them that the luckless infants are consigned to limitless torment; in the West however, and happily sufficiently near the Asylum to be amenable to its benign control, the malady appears in its most aggravated form; a stranger, on entering the building dedicated to St. Matthias, would be apt to be reminded of that lenient mode of treating persons of unsound mind which, instead of galling them with shackles as was the case in more barbarous days, has granted them the utmost liberty consistent with the personal safety of their neighbors: the said stranger would find himself presented with a view of *the backs* of these officating gentlemen, and by a stretch of imagination, he might suppose that himself was addressed, as he hears one of them, with his back still toward him, express the pious aspiration—"The Lord be with you." he would perceive that these patients were so far convalescent as to be intrusted with toys which, in violent hands, might prove dangerous; one of them is a cruciform piece of brass, which during the service, is fixed at an elevation of about eight feet, and which is carried before a procession of choristers, on entering and leaving the church; small lamps of crimson glass, a credence-table, with phials, and playthings of a similar nature

served to intimate that no danger to the person need be apprehended by anyone visiting this institution. The "performance of divine worship" was divided into two acts, on the occasion now described: act the second being ushered in by the tolling of a bell; the imitateness of imbecility characterized the whole, so far as the writer stayed to witness it. One could but reflect on the impotence of a bishop who either connives at it, or is powerless to prevent it, as powerless apparently as the English branch of the same church has been, to inflict any penalty on a mitred member of the community who published his ignorance to the world in the form of the most hostile attack on the authenticity of Scripture which has appeared since the commencement of the Christian era. Mr. Harrison selected the text of his sermon from the first epistle of John; "We know we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren," ch. iii, 14. The reverend gentleman thought fit to assume that "the brethren" included the departed, and endeavoured to make himself and his hearers believe that they should cultivate a vast amount of affection for these worthies of another world, for the like in the Church of Rome, in the Greek Church, and no doubt in the Presbyterian, Baptist, and Methodist Churches, though the latter were not designated. By way of assisting frail humanity to fix its affections on some definite object, the reverend gentleman fished up St. Alban from oblivion, informed us that he was one of the earliest martyrs, that we were assembled on the day dedicated to him, and yet, sad to say, he was only "a black-letter saint," not a saint therefore whose name can be found in the calendar of the Anglican prayer-book; when we should find ourselves cherishing a becoming amount of affection for St. Alban, (St. Napoleon,) and the rest of that goodly company, we

might be assured that "we had passed from death to life, because we love the brethren." It is to be feared that this mock-priest is better acquainted with the saints of the middle and other ages, than with the sinners around him, and yet the circumstance is not without an element of satisfaction, as were it otherwise, he would make either hypocrites or fools of them; now that he is about to receive a good share of the booty from St. James, he will probably also receive more frequent visits from his neighbors, whenever their cupboards and coal bins are empty.

EXTRA PULPIT CRITICISM.

A VISIT TO THE CENTRAL PRISON.

The Province of Ontario possesses more than one *representative institution*; it is happily needless to affirm in what proportion the inmates of a prison represent the great undetected without the walls; suffice it to observe that an incidental advantage accruing from incarceration of the *representative assemblies* is that the little Christian band which habitually seeks their welfare, knows where to find them; one may add moreover, that in such an endeavour, they are, *in principle*, obeying the Divine command to "go out into the highways," a command which involves the suitability of the message for those to whom it is conveyed. The writer availed himself of one of the cabs which the Government supplies for the use of the teachers, and arrived at the prison about 9 o'clock; about that time came some five and twenty teachers together, and speedily we proceeded to a spacious hall, which had just been vacated by an assembly of Roman Catholic prisoners; in that particular corner of the hall, which has been allotted to the use of the priests are altars &c., with the words "Venite adoremus," (Come, let us worship,) on the wall beyond them; in other parts of the hall, the following passages appear in large letters; "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given;" "We praise thee O God," "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, good will towards men." The far-reaching sublimity of the latter passage, it is to be feared, would be as little apprehended by all but

everyone within those walls, as was the portion quoted in the opening prayer, and utterly misapplied—"The bruised reed thou wilt not break, and the smoking flax thou wilt not quench until thou send forth judgment unto victory." Matt. xii., 20. It is a pity that it is scarcely practicable to enquire of persons who put such words into the form of a petition, if they attach any intelligible meaning to them; it is of course obvious that they have not the remotest shadow of a notion that they are reducing a definite prophesy of future "judgment" to an absurdity. It would be more gratifying, if it were possible, to write in terms of unmeasured praise of an effort which, in itself is so commendable as that of seeking the welfare of prisoners, but when one finds one's self in the presence of upwards of two hundred men, with "C. P." (Central Prison) on their backs, and the following words on their lips, one is constrained to say that a service so conducted is desperately and undeniably unsound

"Safe in the arms of Jesus,
Safe on his gentle breast,
There by his love o'ershaded,
Sweetly my soul shall rest.
Hark! 'tis the voice of angels
Borne in a song to me,
Over the fields of glory,
Over the jasper sea."

Average prisoners have at least as much common sense as those outside the walls, and no one need be surprised if they laugh at such an anomaly as this; it is of course only an exaggerated illustration of the teaching which is all but universal, which is traceable to the days wherein Constantine, for political purposes, constituted the Roman empire Christian, which finds its expression in public worship, in the words "Dearly beloved brethren," and in the household, in teaching children to "say grace" &c; it is, in principle, approaching the Almighty as Cain did, and as Abel did not, and that is the teaching, more or less direct, of all spurious churches. The writer is well aware that nothing is more remote from the *intention* of the teachers of this interesting school than to "go in the way of Cain," but they do so nevertheless; they might find some hymns, *written for the express purpose of avoiding*

the making hypocrites of children for whom they are intended, at the Gospel tract depot in Yonge Street, which, if not precisely suitable for their purpose will at least, be found worth perusal; the hymn-book used at the Mercer Institute, so far as could be gathered from a cursory glance, is far superior to the trash of Moody and Sankey. It is to be feared that anyone who fails to regard that arrangement of lessons styled "international" as more than a futile attempt to convert conflicting sects into "a happy family;" must himself be content to be considered one of "the peculiar people," but so it is; one of the consequences of this arrangement was that the writer was required to listen to an ardent harangue from the secretary of the prisoners' aid association on the subject of the lesson for the day; Mark ix, 33-50. This was delivered subsequently to the teaching of the school in classes, and being intended to epitomize the lesson, would serve to impress it on the minds of all assembled: it may also, in certain cases, serve to counteract the errors of less instructed teachers. All who attempt to teach what themselves have been taught in relation to Scripture, must, when they address themselves to reflecting minds, find themselves occasionally in an awkward position: and in the judgment of the writer, the superintendent placed himself in such a position, on this occasion: the appointed lesson for the day was said to teach that "we may take children as our pattern, and charity as our aim;" "children" are sometimes found of a larger growth," and such children may be apt to comment on that feature of their instructor's teaching which related to "where their worm dieth not," &c., unfavourably; they may be apt to say that they fail to recognize any "aim of charity" in such teaching; what if they should affirm that the Bible, possessing every claim to reverence as it does, because it has been recognized by the best men and women as the word of God in all ages, appeals nevertheless to the individual understanding, and while it contains instruction in regard to which one may be content to exercise faith, yet when a line of teaching which either shocks every sense

of right or terrifies, is presented in the name of God, it behoves one to enquire if it be really so? "Children" who are given to the inconvenient habit of enquiry, will find that this passage, appalling as under any circumstances it is, instead of appearing thrice, as in the authorized version it does, occurs but *once* in the revised, which has been altered according to Sinaitic and Vatican M.S.S; the latter clause of the forty-fifth verse is also omitted in the R. V.; these enquiring children will be apt to interpret this passage by the aid of passages which are indisputable, such as "God is love," 1 John. iv, 16 "That God may be all in all," 1 Cor. xv, 28. "For with this very purpose was the gospel preached even to the dead, that they may be judged indeed in relation to men in flesh, but live in relation to God in spirit" 1 Peter iv, 6. see also ch. iii, 19, and all such passages as prove that it is the province of Omnipotence to limit the "ages" according to his will; the "children" will then conclude that when punishment is needed hereafter, the Almighty will inflict it, as he does in the present life, with a view to reformation, and a little research will satisfy them that the bulk of the early Fathers entertained no such idea as that of limitless punishment, and that the teaching of the Western Church, in that respect, is traceable to Augustine.

It is remarkable that the compiler or compilers of the marginal references to the authorized version should have overlooked the manifest reference on the part of the Lord to the concluding verse of Isaiah. "And they shall go forth, and look on the carcases of the men who have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, and their fire shall not be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring to all flesh." They who understand that Jerusalem is to be restored, may learn something by referring to the following passages, as illustrating that notwithstanding the apparently strong negative, a limit to the "quenching" is intended, 2 Kings xxii, 17. 2 Chr. xxxiv. 25. Jer. vii, 20, xvii, 27, and xxi. 12. Ez. xx, 47, 48. The forty-seventh verse relates to Egypt, "The forest of the south," but in ch. xxix, 14, we have the definite promise "I will bring again the prosperity of Egypt, &c."

A VISIT TO THE MERCER INSTITUTE.

It is highly creditable to the ministerial association of this city, that notwithstanding the arduous labors devolving on them each Lord's day, they should undertake the additional, and unremunerated burden of addressing, each member in turn, the convalescent inmates of the Asylum for the insane, and the prisoners at the Mercer Institute; this they do in the afternoon; on the 18th inst. it fell to the lot of the Rev. Robert Cade to undertake this duty, and as the service was one of four which he was required to conduct on that day, it was obviously too much for any man to undertake, with due regard to health of body and mind. One is apt to suppose that superannuated ministers, or some "laymen" might be found, both able and willing to undertake such services, and that such persons might be delegated for the purpose. The service on this occasion was commenced with what is styled a hymn, but "a spiritual song" would be a more correct designation for it, and as such it cannot be said to have been unsuitable; of this the reader can exercise his judgment, as a verse of it is subjoined—

"Art thou weary, art thou languid?

Art thou sore distressed?

"Come to me," saith One, and coming,
Be at rest." &c.

A second "spiritual song" contrasted so favorably with the crude material published by Moody and Sankey, that in the interest of psalmody it will be well to present its first verse—

"Come every soul by sin oppressed,

There's mercy with the Lord,

And he will surely give you rest,

By trusting in His word."

The tone adopted by Mr. Cade throughout the service, was eminently sympath-

*This collection is published by Messrs. Copp, Clark & Co.

etic, and in harmony with the foregoing stanzas; his address consequently drew tears from some of the poor women who are daily realizing the consequences of their wrong doing; he based his appeal on Romans i, 16, having first read from the epistle, to the twenty-fourth verse inclusive. "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God to salvation to everyone who believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." The reverend gentleman endeavoured to describe the attractiveness of Christ, he then proceeded to dilate on his credentials, and on the power of Christianity for good; he observed that no spiritual light is derivable from nature; that is obtainable from the Sun of righteousness alone; that when the love of God is shed abroad in the heart, "the Light of the world communicates reforming and refining power; power to soften and subdue; the name of Jesus then becomes so supremely attractive that thousands are ready to die for it; this was illustrated by a narrative which seemed to the writer to savour too much of a certain class of pulpit-story, but which was possibly authentic. In the course of his sermon, the preacher fell into the error, possibly borrowed from Canon Farrar, of stating that all kinds of benevolent institutions were traceable to Christianity alone; this was demonstrated not to be the case, in the Westminster Review for 1878, if the writer's memory fail him not. The reverend gentleman concluded his discourse by enlarging on the universal need of the gospel, on its *adaptability* for the learned and the unlearned alike, and on its being *intended* to be accepted by all; he descanted on the voluntary sufferings of the Apostle Paul on account of it, and urged its acceptance on those who evidently listened to him with deep interest—he bade them so reverence the Lord Jesus, as to "bring forth the royal diadem and crown him Lord of all."

[Press of matter for the present week necessitates the removal of the ordinary heading.]