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Pulpit Criticism:

WITH

ANSWERS TO OBJECTIONS TO THE BIBLE.

A WEEKLY SHEET.

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THE METHODIST CHURCH.

RICHMOND STREET.

The service at this church was conducted by the Rev. W. J. Hewitt, of Portage La Prairie, on the 11th inst. An incident occurred shortly after the writer left the church, which contrasted strikingly with what he had seen and heard within; in one of the "lanes of the city," in which a stable is situated, he overheard a man, white with age, earnestly commending the claims of the Saviour to a young man, while the latter was occupying himself with the harness; the circumstance, while it was calculated to remind the writer of that bright feature of Methodism which connects itself with local preachers, impressed him also with the consideration that He who deigned to be "laid in a manger," would look far more complacently on the stable-sermon, than on that which had been ushered in with "How beautiful upon the mountains," etc. Regarded from a Biblical standpoint, the sermons which are habitually preached in the midst of a weekly flower (and feather) show are greatly of the nature of a travesty. Two portions of Scripture were read, on this occasion, as "first and second lesson," but the preacher's efforts were, as his ecclesiastical system demands they should be, concentrated on his essay; this production was hung on Ps. lxxxiv. 11; it was calculated to impress the hearers that the reverend gentleman believed and felt the force of such truths as he enunciated; the best illustration he gave us, related to the mode in which the Almighty is wont to minister to the needs of his children; no earthly parent, said the preacher, would throw a loaf to a child who asked for bread, but, on the contrary, would cut him a slice; in like manner does the "Parent of good" minister "daily" spiritual "bread" to those who seek it; Mr. Hewitt described the sad bereavements through which he had passed, and emphasized, in view of them, his conviction of the trustworthiness of the statements of his text—"Jehovah God is a sun and shield; Jehovah will give grace and glory; *no good thing will he withhold from those who walk uprightly.*" He was probably

not aware that Mr. George Muller, in his published addresses, has expatiated on the same truth in relation to the death of *his* wife. As this was doubtless a specimen of a stock of sermons which a certain class of ministers keep always on hand, and was probably, in the judgment of its compiler, not the worst, it is the more remarkable that he should have given the rein to his imagination to the extent of speaking of spending "an eternal night with God in heaven," and telling us that "when the soul quits its present tenement, Satan lets fly an arrow after it, in its flight toward rest;" there was also a considerable dash of unreality in the statement that we ought to be consciously "better men on this day than on the previous week," etc. Some sort of an attempt was made at dilating on the psalm from which the text was taken, as a whole, but that went little further than offering various suggestions as to its authorship; these were accompanied by the statement that it was written for the Sons of Korah, "*who perished*" long before most of the supposed authors could have written it; this little anachronism might have been avoided, had the good man acquainted himself more completely with the history of the sons of Korah; in such case he could have perceived a distinction in the degree of criminality between the case of Korah and the others of "his company," as recorded in Numbers xvi. 25, 27; he would also have perceived that "*the children of Korah died not*," as recorded in Numbers xxvi. 11. Our friend of the prairie was not the man to relieve us of "amiable tabernacles," (ver. 1 of Psalm lxx. v.) we will therefore substitute "lovely" for "amiable," with his permission; it appears also that "turtle-doves" rather than "swallows" are described in the third verse, as "finding a nest" for themselves on what are symbolically styled "the altars of Jehovah;" this according to the Septuagint, the Syriac, and the Targum; as it is desirable to *understand* what we read, it becomes necessary to substitute "Blessed is the man whose strength is in

thee; in whose heart are the ways of Him (*i.e.* God);"—to substitute that reading for the unintelligible "in whose heart are the ways of them." "The valley of *weeping*" would be preferable to "Baca," and the seventh verse would be more intelligible if read in view of the future thus, "They go from company to company, in order to appear before God in Zion." (See Ex. xxxiv. 23.) Very characteristically, and frequently in the Psalms, the Almighty is reminded by the suppliant, of His covenant promise to Abraham, "Fear not, Abraham, I am *thy shield*," etc., and of this the 9th and 11th verses afford examples. As, however, there are churches not a few, in which the worshippers do not seek instruction, such persons and all others who worship in spirit and in truth, will happily be able to unite in the concluding sentiment of this eighty-fourth Psalm—"O Jehovah of hosts, blessed is the man who trusteth in thee."

THE EAST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

KING STREET.

The service at this church was conducted by the Rev. J. M. Cameron, on the evening of the 28th ult. The moral aspect of this Church possesses greater claims on the sympathy of the writer than does the preaching; the Church originated, as many Churches have, in the establishment of a mission-school in the district which, twelve years ago, might be termed an outlying district; its pastor, the Rev. J. M. Cameron, united his labours with those already at work, and the present Church is the result of that union. Mr. C. is one who spends much time among his people, and takes less interest in the fleece than in the flock; this has been evidenced by his returning \$200.00 on one occasion when it had been tendered him by his congregation, as a supplement to his somewhat scanty stipend. When the writer first had the pleasure to make his acquaintance, he rejoiced to hear him say

that he would gladly support himself by secular means, if an opportunity to do so should present itself, and that he would willingly accept voluntary offerings from his flock, in lieu of stipulated payment; the ministerial order generally are probably little aware how greatly a disposition on their part to adopt such principles as those just indicated would diminish the feeling of antagonism on the part of those outside churches toward those within. Our friend, Mr. Cameron may, in some sense, be said to have "the care of all the churches" at the present time, inasmuch as he is the Moderator of the Presbytery; he has also acted as one of the honorary secretaries of the Bible Society for the past eight years, and of late has been taking a prominent part in the project of taking a census of this city in relation to the religious profession of the inhabitants, *as manifested by attendance at public worship*; on the whole, our friend, Mr. C., is entitled to be regarded as one of the wise men of the east, the frankincense of whose life is habitually presented to "the bright and Morning Star."

It is satisfactory to find that the above-named church has adopted the practice of receiving the contributions of its supporters in a similar manner to that adopted at St. Philip's, and that in consequence of the latter mode having been noticed in the 20th number of this publication.

EXTRA PULPIT CRITICISM.

A VISIT TO THE SPEECHLESS.

"The quality of mercy is not strained;
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath: it is twice blessed;
It blesseth him who gives, and him who takes."

This twice-blessed attribute of heaven finds habitual illustration in more than one apartment of Shaftesbury Hall; in the afternoon of each Lord's day, a group of those who have either lost the power of speech, or who have never possessed it, assemble for worship; and the privilege of ministering among them is now divided between Mr. Nasmith and Mr. Brigden;

it is now three years since the Y.M.C.A.'s committee requested Mr. N. to take the especial charge of this heavily afflicted section of the community, of whom there are from thirty to forty in the city. Mr. B. has labored among these afflicted ones for the past five years. Mr. Nasmith has consequently ministered to their temporal and spiritual needs from that time forth, and his communications with them have impressed him with their need of sympathy from those who enjoy immunity from any such affliction as falls to their lot. The room in which they assemble is rendered cheerful by pictures being suspended on the wall; and the appropriate passage from the gospel of Mark, at one end of it; "And looking up to heaven, he sighed and saith to him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened." Ch. vii. 34. This passage is one of two, relating to miracles in that gospel, in which the untranslated words uttered by the Lord are recorded; the second occurs at ch. v. 41. The service on the occasion of the writer's visit, was conducted by Mr. Brigden, who lost the power of hearing when he was eleven years of age; he however retains the faculty of speech; the service was attended by thirteen persons, in order to communicate with whom, it was necessary to do so by means of signs; one of them, an intelligent young man, lost his hearing through falling into a tub of water, when he was a child. The bright and cheerful aspect of Mr. B. and of the majority of his hearers throughout the service tended to dispel the sadness which otherwise must have overcast a bystander; it was interesting to observe that Mr. B. stopped from time to time, in order to interrogate his hearers, and received replies from several of them by means of manual signs. The passages on which he dilated were indicated on a blackboard, alternated with the word "prayer;" when the time for that exercise successively arrived, the small congregation rose, and their representative conducted it by means of signs. The only passage of those selected, that seems to need any comment; is that of Luke ii.

49, which it would be preferable to read thus—"How is it that ye seek me? wist ye not that I must be in my Father's house?" As the writer was unable to comprehend the signification of the signs, he must leave the ministrations themselves without comment; it is enough to observe that such a scene as he has endeavoured to describe, was calculated to make any participant long for that period of promise when "The tongue of the dumb shall sing, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped." Isaiah xxxv. 5, 6.

An objection on the part of the former deacon, referred to in Nos. 21 and 22, related to David, notwithstanding his delinquencies, being described as a "man after God's own heart;" any one accustomed to reflect on the nature of evidence will probably acknowledge that the narratives which relate David's sorrowful fall afford on the face of them the strongest presumption of their veracity, as no writer of a cunningly devised fable, presented in the name of the living God, would dream of subjecting himself to such criticism as the history of David would necessarily call forth. Two considerations serve to explain such portions of Scripture as those referred to; *the former* is the fact that the Almighty uniformly speaks with approval of man, when it is possible to do so; the Lord Jesus Christ and the apostles do the same; He who saw *the heart* of David could therefore speak of him as a 'man after His own heart; the second consideration is that of *the faithfulness of God*, who does not scruple to chronicle the crimes of his own people; that such acts as those recorded in 1 Sam. xxvii. should be recorded at all, will be admitted to illustrate the faithfulness of the Most High, to the utmost; the object of such an exhibition of the evil deeds of the best of men, is doubtless that we may see ourselves as in a mirror, and 'take heed lest we fall:' from this point of

view, all Scripture 'is profitable for teaching,' &c., 2 Tim. iii. 16. Inasmuch as Amalek was one of the nations whose crimes were long before ripe for judgment, it is easy to understand that however much evil might be intermixed with David's motives and acts, he was, in [the slaughter of that people, consciously executing what the fiat of the All-wise had "determined before to be done." It is remarkable that there is enough of the sentimental in many men to make them shrink with horror at judicial deeds of blood, though the same men realize nothing distressing to their nerves in such a bloodless destruction as was involved by the flood. It appears probable that in spite of our ready assumption of competence to decide in matters of this moment, we shall be found to be altogether incompetent; and it would be wiser on our part to echo the sentiment of Abraham, expressed in corresponding circumstances, and to say—"Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"—Gen. xviii. 25.

A law student requested a certain ecclesiastical adventurer in this city, part of whose policy it is to reply to letters from the pulpit, to reconcile the apparently conflicting statements that the Almighty is a God of Love, and yet that he commanded to "rip up," etc.; the ecclesiastic declined to answer the question; the writer would reply to such a question, (1) by saying that God issued no such command as that referred to; (2) we gather from the New Testament that "Light" and "Love" are the essential characteristics of the Almighty; we also gather from the whole Bible, that He is the moral governor of the world; as such, He necessarily acts judicially; Satan assailed his character of love in Eden, when he said, "Yea, hath God said, ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" and the Lord Jesus intimated that the manifestation of God's love to our race was hindered until the question of man's transgression was for ever settled; hence He exclaimed, "And how am I straitened (or pained) till it be accomplished." Luke xii. 50.