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Rev. H. B. ...
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Pulpit Criticism.

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,

ST. JAMES' SQUARE.

The service at this Church was conducted by the Rev. Dr. King on the morning of the 12th inst. If one were asked what was its chief characteristic, the unhesitating reply would be—devout reverence throughout, and this so marked, as to have reminded one that all churches are supposed to exist, for the promotion of godliness, in cases where it already exists, and for extending it, where it does not. The beneficial influence which cannot fail to be exercised in cases where the ministry is of the character above-intimated, has impressed the writer afresh with the desirability of the churches taking the initiative in selecting candidates for the Ministry, instead of allowing any unsuccessful “dry-goods” man, or indolent young farmer, who may have concluded that “the work of the ministry” is both genteel and profitable, to strike in that direction; piety in combination with at least average ability, cannot be so rare but that men might be found who have given evidence of qualification for such labor, and who consequently would give better promise of future usefulness than would he of the “dry-goods,” or of the unsped plough. To return to the consideration of the service in question, it had hardly been commenced before we were confronted with one of those chronic characteristics of the ecclesiastical systems of the day—“our iniquities prevail against us;” this was followed by a petition that the sins of the past week might be obliterated.

Whether the good people had any idea of spending the remainder of their days in their beautiful Church, as they sung the subjoined lines from one of their quaint and cumbrous old paraphrases, must remain with themselves to say—“That all days of my life I may within God’s house remain;” they might also possibly enlighten us, by telling us the meaning of these other words from another paraphrase—“From death to free their soul, in dearth life unto them to yield.” In direct contradiction to petitions of such a character as those presented is the lucid and definite portion of the epistle to the Colossians (Ch. iii, 1-17) which was read during the service; a portion which would become more intelligible, if the third verse were read thus—“For ye died,” etc., *i. e.*, when Christ died (as regarded from above), hence the force of the first verse—“If ye then be risen with Christ,” etc.; it will be well also to substitute “calumny” for “blasphemy” in the eighth verse, and “thanksgiving” for “grace,” in the sixteenth. The third chapter of Malachi was one of the portions of Scripture which was read during the service, and in *this case*, anyone who might happen to be conversant with the bearing of the chapter, would be unlikely to be content that it should be merely read; such a malcontent would know that the “sudden coming of the Lord to his temple,” does not relate to Christ’s first coming, but to that period of which it is written “But who may abide the day

of His coming? And who shall stand when He appeareth? (v. 2.) The malcontent would be aware that it relates to that coming of which himself has stated that "as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even to the west, so shall also the presence of the Son of Man be." Matt. xxiv, 27. The title "Lord of hosts," occurring as it does, in connexion with the return of the Lord, and so frequently throughout the prophecy of Malachi, is itself a feature of considerable interest; the purification of *the priestly house*, as gold and silver are purged, (for judgment necessarily begins at the house of God) corresponds apparently with that *spoiling* of Shechem, the city of the Levites, of which we read in Psalm cviii, 7; when the Levites shall have been thus purified, by passing through the fires of judgment, they will be in a position to "present to Jehovah an offering in righteousness; then will the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be acceptable to Jehovah, as in the days of old," etc., vs. 3-4. "Then" also we can understand that Israel will be in a position to "discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him who serveth God, and him who serveth him not." v. 18. "The eagles" of judgment (Matt. xxiv, 28,) having pounced on the carcass, "immediately after the tribulation of those days," apparently "shall the sign of the Son of man appear in heaven, and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, and he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect (Israelites) from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other;" then it is, as we apprehend, that the words of Malachi iii, 16-17,

which our friend the presbyter selected for his text, will have their fulfilment—"then they who feared Jehovah spake often one to another; and Jehovah hearkened, and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before him for those who feared Jehovah, and who thought on his name; and they shall be mine, saith *Jehovah of hosts*, in that day when I make up my jewels," etc. The dear man who discoursed on this sublime passage, has had the *disadvantage* of being trained, as we take it, in the driest school of presbyterianism, hence he *applied* it exclusively to believers of the past and present dispensation; he will forgive a smile, it is to be hoped, when in view of his own prayers—"in wrath, remember mercy," etc.—he innocently remarked that some Christians regard the designation "jewel" as "too high" for them, *i. e.*, they have not faith enough to believe in the Almighty's estimate of them, and who can wonder at that, when the *oral* teaching they habitually rely on, is of the character of "our iniquities prevail against us," etc.? In *applying* his text to his flock, this "good shepherd" made many true remarks, such as that "even good men too often avoid conversation on religious subjects;" for the encouragement of such, he reminded them that the covenant-keeping "Jehovah hearkened and heard," etc.; our friend was evidently too deeply impressed with the importance of his subject, to cultivate eloquence; indeed, if we were inclined to find fault with him, we should say that he erred in a redundancy of plainness of speech; his mode of addressing his flock is too simple and too earnest to be popular, but those are precisely the characteristics of his address which commended themselves to his critic. As the reverend gentle-

man described the word "name" in v. 16, as merely representing the perfections of the Almighty, it may be well to repeat on this occasion, what has been mentioned before in these papers, that the Jews regarded the word as expressing that Name which is above every name, at the mention of which, every knee must ultimately bow, of those in heaven, and those in earth, and those under the earth, and every tongue confess that He who bears it is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

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 EVENING SCHOOL FOR 'M.A.'s

The condition of our pulpits, and of other arenas, for the display of learning, or the lack of it, has suggested the desirability of organizing, during the winter months, a school of the above-named description. One of the pupils who it is to be hoped, may avail himself of this educational medium, is the Minister of Education of Ontario; when this gentleman shall have graduated from the Evening School, he will probably prefer an English designation for the Department over which he presides, to that eminently foreign one which has been perpetuated from its foundation. The honorable gentleman will doubtless have learned, before his curriculum has terminated, that "Agriculture Department," would be as correct a mode of designating the Department usually styled "Agricultural," as "Education Department" is. The Post-Master General, it is also greatly to be desired, may at least attend the aforementioned school intermittently*; this hon. gentleman will then, before

the expiration of the season, no doubt have learned that "England Post Card," "Germany Post Card," etc., would be about as correct, and euphonious as "Canada Post Card." That Ontarian Bishop of the Anglican Communion who discourses of "Greek Authors" from the pulpit (possibly by the aid of translations), and yet pronounces the Latin phrase "*festina lente*" as if it were spelt *festinna lent*—that distinguished member of the episcopate would prove a hopeful scholar, especially if he did not forget to bring his "golden apples" with him. Certain heads of Colleges too would contribute to shed lustre on the school; one of them, when addressing a body of teachers in 1881, by way of being emphatic, discoursed of "enforced coercion," and of "the whole essential essence of true gentlemanly conduct," etc. This gentleman is understood to be a strenuous advocate of the phrase "you was," as a specimen of classical English. Another prominent educational functionary, might learn that "Chaldea" is usually spelt with an "h." The Provost of Trinity College, when he shall have left the school, will probably not tell us (in the College Calendar) that "four of the members of the Corporation of Trinity College are nominated by each of the Bishops of Toronto, Huron, Ontario, and Niagara;" the Provost will probably have learned to say that the members are nominated by the respective Bishops. The Secretary of the Board of Health will, of course, avail himself of so simple a means (as will be provided by the school) of learning how to construct paragraphs other than that which we extract from "Medical Criticism;" "The six diseases most prevalent in the ten Districts, are seen to be arranged in their order of prevalence, while at the

* It would have been difficult to devise a more effectual mode of proclaiming to the rest of the world the education condition (according to the English of the Ontarian Department) of the Dominion, than that achieved by the Post-Master General.

same time the percentage which each disease is of the whole reported for its District is shown." That Professor (possibly of euphony) in McMaster Hall, who tells us that "if the Baptist paper will stand up square, without personality, there is no teing as to the power that the new book-room is to wield,"—will doubtless be benefited by taking this winter course. The distinguished Professor informs us that "the world is now filled with trash in the line of books—*trash of all sorts*—material that neither supports body nor soul," etc., but in contrast with all this, the book-room is to supply all comers with material which will "build up true men and women," so that there is hope in our end after all. The pious aspiration with which this dealer in untempered mortar plastered the purchaser of the book-room is too fine to be omitted—"May God help the men through Canada that have been blessed with the means," etc. The Professor, by the time he has graduated at the Evening School, will have learned that an article styled the dollar, regardless of the mode of its acquisition, has more to do with "helping a man through Canada," than has He whose "help" he so devoutly invokes. That "M. A.," whose candidature for a vacant office in University College some two years ago, was signalized by the issue of a circular containing about eight blunders, will undoubtedly do credit to the school. The individual who is responsible for the description of such a tree as "*lignum: vita*," in the grounds of the Educational Department, will also figure among the hopefuls. The crowd of pupils of this new school promises to be so numerous that the only building at all suitable for their accommodation is that exten-

sive one at the western end of the city, and *that* unhappily is in a chronic state of overcrowding. The degree of F.R.A.U.D will be conferred on unsuccessful candidates for examination.

A bill of indictment consisting of counts uncounted, and extending to five folios, has been filed against the Editor, on account of the numerous errors into which he is said to have fallen, when criticising the proceedings at the corner of James and Louisa Streets; all the alleged errors moreover are said to have been characterized by malice aforethought; the first of the errors consisted in the assembly having been described as "Disciples," instead of as "Disciples of the Lord;" the literary curiosity above indicated has been sent to the Editor with a view to its publication, and in the event of there being a rush, on the part of the subscribers, to the office of the Editor's printer, in order to see the document which lies there, due precaution will be taken against overcrowding. A less imposing document from a member of the same body, informs the Editor that he has "fallen into a serious error touching the faith of the Disciples of Christ;" (a different title to that conveyed above). The alleged error refers to the Disciples' rejection of the doctrine of the personality of the Holy Spirit; individual disavowals of the holding this negative doctrine are cheerfully accepted, but we fear that with regard to matters in dispute between the gentleman who *has preferred the indictment*, and the Editor, we must endorse the dictum of the late Cardinal Wiseman, and maintain that the Church has never gained by controversy.