

# THE FREETHINKER.

REGISTERED FOR]

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

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## "COMIC BIBLE" SKETCHES.—XIX.



BALAM'S ASS.

"And the ass saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand; and the ass turned aside out of the way, and Balaam smote the ass to turn her into the way. . . . And the Lord opened the mouth of the ass, and she said unto Balaam: What have I done unto thee that thou hast smitten me these three times?"—Numbers xxii., 23, 28.

## GOD AND THE QUEEN.

THE Queen is now safely lodged at Mentone. Although the political outlook is not very bright, there is pretty sure to be a good solid majority to vote a dowry for Prince Leopold's bride; and so long as royalty is safe it does not much matter what becomes of the people. That dreadful Bradlaugh is gagged; he cannot open his mouth in the House of Commons against perpetual pensions or royal grants. The interests of monarchy are in no immediate peril, and so the Queen is off to Mentone.

Now she is gone, and the loyal hubbub has subsided, it is just the time to consider her late "providential escape" from the bullet which was never fired at her.

What is the meaning of *providential*? God does all or nothing. There is a special providence in the fall of a sparrow, as well as in the fall of empires. In that case *everything* is providential. But this is not the ordinary view. When a railway accident occurs those who do not come to grief ascribe their preservation to Providence. Who then is responsible for the fate of those who perish? Centuries ago Christians would have answered, "the Devil." Now they give no answer at all, but treat the question as frivolous or profane.

Thomas Cooper, in his *Autobiography*, says that the perfecting touch was given to his conversion by an interposition of God. During a collision, the carriage in which he sat

was lifted clean on to another line of rails, and thus escaped the fate of the other carriages, which were broken to pieces. Pious Thomas recognised at once the finger of God, and he there and then fell on his knees and offered up a thanksgiving. He was too vain to carry his argument out to its logical end. Why did the Lord protect him, and not his fellow-travellers? Was he of more importance than any of the others? And why, if it was right to thank God for saving Thomas Cooper, would it be wrong to curse him for smashing all the rest?

This superstition of Providence is dying out. Common people are gradually being left to the laws of Nature. If a workhouse were to catch on fire, no one would speak of those who escaped the flames as providentially saved. God does not look after the welfare of paupers; nor is it likely that he would pluck a charwoman's brat out of the fire if it tumbled in during her absence. Such interpositions are absurd. But with kings, queens, princes, princesses, and big nobles in general, the case is different. God looks after the quality. He stretches forth his hand to save them from danger, from the pestilence that walketh by day and the terror that walketh by night. And his worshippers take just the same view of the "swells." When the Queen came to London, a few weeks ago, one of her mounted attendants was thrown and badly hurt; and the next day one of the loyal Tory papers reported that her Majesty had completely recovered from the accident to her outrider!

But if the Lord overlooks the great ones of the earth, why is he not impartial? He did not turn aside Guiteau's bullet, nor did he answer the prayers of a whole nation on its knees. President Garfield was allowed to die after a long agony. Poor Mrs. Garfield believed up to the very last minute that God would interpose and save her husband. But he never did. Why was he so indifferent in this case? Was it because Garfield was a President instead of a King; the elected leader of free men instead of the hereditary ruler of political slaves? Informer Newdegate would say so. In his opinion God Almighty hates Republicans. Yet the Bible clearly shows that the Lord is opposed to monarchy. He gave his chosen people a king as a punishment, after plainly telling them what an evil they had sought; and there is perhaps a covert irony in the story of Saul, the son of Kish, who went to seek his father's asses and found instead a nation of subjects—two-legged asses, who begged him to mount them and ride.

Take another case. Why did God permit the Nihilists to assassinate the late Czar of Russia? All their previous plots had failed. Why was the last plot allowed to succeed? There is only one answer. God had nothing to do with any of them, and the last succeeded because it was better devised and more carefully executed. If God protected the Czar against their former attempts, they were too many for him in the end; that is, they defeated Omnipotence—an absurdity too flagrant for any sane man to believe.

Why should God care for princes more than for peasants, for queens more than for washerwomen? There is no difference in their compositions; they are all made of the same flesh and blood. The very book these loyal gushers call the Word of God declares that he is no respecter of persons. What are the distinctions of rank and wealth? Mere nothings. Look down from an altitude of a thousand feet, and an emperor and his subjects shall look equally small; and what are even a thousand feet in the infinite universe? Nay, strip them of all their fictions of dress; reduce them to the same condition of a two-legged featherless biped; and you shall find the forms of strength or beauty, and the power of brain, impartially distributed by Nature, who is the truest Democrat, who raises her Shakespeares from the lowest strata of society, and laughs to scorn the pride of palaces and thrones.



Providence is an absurdity, a superstitious relic of the ignorant past. Sensible men disbelieve it, and scientists laugh it to scorn. Our very moral sense revolts against it. Why should God help a few of his children and neglect all the others? Explosions happen in mines, and scores of honest industrious men, doing the rough work of the world and winning bread for wife and child, are blown to atoms or hurled into shapeless death. God does not help them, and tears moisten the dry bread of half-starved widows and orphans. Sailors on the mighty deep go down with uplifted hands, or slowly gaze their life away on the merciless heavens. The mother bends over her dying child, the first flower of her wedded love, the sweetest hope of her life. She is rigid with despair, and in her hot tearless eyes there dwells a dumb misery that would touch a heart of stone. But God does not help, the death-curtain falls, and darkness reigns where all was light.

Who has the audacity to say that the God who will not aid a mother in the death-chamber shelters the Queen upon her throne? It is an insult to reason and a ghastly mockery of justice. The impartiality of Nature is better than the mercy of such a God.

G. W. FOOTE.

#### ALEXANDER BAIN ON JOHN STUART MILL\*

This book may be taken as a sequel to the "James Mill: a Biography," which Professor Bain has recently put forward. Though smaller in extent it is fully as interesting in matter, and serves as an admirable commentary on Mill's own "Autobiography." With that work many of our readers will be acquainted, and they therefore will need no detail of the extraordinary training which he received at the hand of his radical and philosophic father, nor of the precocity which he displayed.

Freethinkers will be interested to note that among John Stuart Mill's earliest contributions to the *Westminster Review* was a paper severely commenting on the prosecutions directed against Richard Carlile, editor of the *Republican*, then imprisoned for selling Paine's "Age of Reason" and Palmer's "Principles of Nature." Prof. Bain gives the following extract from the peroration to this article, which was written at the early age of eighteen:—

"That Christians, the author of whose religion was tried and executed for blasphemy, his own words during the trial being pronounced sufficient against him by his sacerdotal judge; Christians, whose prophetic books are full of the most biting sarcasms on the gods and worship of the mightiest empires; Christians, who boast a noble army of martyrs, whose lives were the penalty of their avowed departure from the religion of their country; Christians whose missionaries are striving in every region of the earth to bring other religions 'into disbelief and contempt;' Christians, Protestant Christians, whose reformers perished in the dungeon or at the stake as heretics, apostates, and blasphemers; Christians, whose religion breathes charity, liberty, and mercy in every line; that they, having gained the power to which so long they were victims, should employ it in the self-same way, and strive to crush the opposition of opinion, or of passion even, by vindictive persecution, is most monstrous."

Prof. Bain's acquaintance with Mr. Mill dates from 1839. In the following year Bain himself began writing for the *Westminster Review*, and thus his intimacy became cemented, until at length he fully shared in Mill's confidence on all matters of opinion. He thus describes Mill's personal appearance:—

"His tall, slim figure, his youthful face and bald head, fair hair and ruddy complexion, and the twitching of his eyebrows when he spoke, first arrested the attention; then the vivacity of his manner, his thin voice approaching to sharpness, but nothing shrill or painful about it; his comely features and sweet expression. To complete the picture, I should mention his dress which was constant—a black dress suit with silk necktie" (p. 64).

We gather from this book a larger conception of Mill's capacity for work than we should derive from the "Autobiography," and of course Mill's exaggerated opinion of his wife's influence and powers is corrected. Mill's best work was done before he came under the influence of his wife, and Bain correctly places the "Logic" and "Political Economy" above "Liberty" and "Subjection of Women."

The Professor gives us a significant passage in regard to the "Political Economy." Mill, it seems, expected an outcry

against his doctrines on property. He frequently spoke of his proposals as to inheritance and bequest, which, if carried out, would pull down all large fortunes in two generations. To his surprise, however, this part of the work made no sensation at all. Bain says, "the question of the existence of large fortunes is necessarily a very complex one; and I should like that he had examined it fully, which I do not think he ever did." (p. 89.)

The author exhibits throughout that impartiality which a philosopher—one who wishes to seem that which he really is—would desire in a biographer. He writes not as a friend, still less as a hero-worshipper, but rather as a judge who will nothing extenuate nor set down aught in malice. No faults or deficiencies are concealed. On the other hand he is not stinting in praise where deserved. Here is a characteristic instance:—

"He was absolutely without any feeling of rivalry or jealousy of other men's success. His originality and fecundity of ideas would not have exempted him so completely from the dread of being anticipated in his discoveries, or balked in his credit, had he not possessed a fund of generosity of character, for which sympathy is another name. He poured himself out in conversation, and his ideas were caught up and used, with or without acknowledgment; but he never disturbed himself one way or other. Of this part of his character I can speak absolutely, and not by figure of speech, under which we may turn a part into a whole. In other virtues he had his limits, but in this he had none" (p. 155).

Mill's generous profers of help to Auguste Comte and Herbert Spencer are well known, and do not stand alone. Professor Bain himself makes his acknowledgment. He, moreover, claims for Mill the merit of being a truthseeker throughout his life. He says:—

"To be found in error was no affront to his *amour propre*. He was not afraid to encounter an able opponent; simply because to change an opinion, under the force of new facts or reasonings, was not only not repugnant, it was welcome. His opinions were in marked opposition to his worldly interests, as his father's had been. He did not publicly avow his dissent from the orthodoxy of the country; but it was well enough known in a very wide private circle, and could be inferred from his published writings. He had long determined to throw off the mask entirely, when the time should be ripe for it. He intended, he said, to expend all the reputation he got by his books in upholding unpopular opinions; and was prevented from an earlier avowal of these solely by the circumstance that the silent course of opinion was serving the interests of progress better than any violent shock on his part would have done." (p. 157).

Dr. Bain attributes Mill's loss of his seat for Westminster greatly to the fact of his having subscribed to Mr. Bradlaugh's Election Fund.

The posthumous "Essays on Religion" were, according to our author, a surprise to his friends, not by their attacks on orthodoxy, but by their concessions to what he calls "modern sentimental Theism." He says that both Mill's Theism and his estimate of Christianity, as founded on the character of Christ, are concessions to the existing Theology, "and, as is usual in such cases, the inch has been stretched to an ell."

The following criticism upon the latter item of Mill's oft-quoted concessions, though long, is too trenchant and notable to be omitted:—

"We are, of course, at liberty to dissent from the prevailing view which makes Christ a divine person. But to reduce a Deity to the human level, to rank him simply as a great man, and to hold ideal intercourse with him in that capacity, is, to say the least of it, an incongruity. Historians and moralists have been accustomed to treat with condemnation those monarchs that, after being dethroned have accepted in full the position of subjects. Either to die, or else to withdraw into dignified isolation, has been accounted the only fitting termination to the loss of royal power. So, a Deity dethroned should retire altogether from playing a part in human affairs, and remain simply as an historic name.

"The point of congruity or propriety is not, as I conceive, the worst objection to Mill's proposal. The doctrines, proscriptions, or sayings of one believed to be a God, must all have a religious bearing; they are properly adapted to men in their religious capacity. They may often refer to matters of mere worldly conduct, but the religious side is still a vital part of them. If religion were done away with, to the extent that Mill would have it, those sayings of Christ must lose their suitability to human life as so transformed. 'Forgive that ye may be forgiven (by God)' is no longer applicable. The best guidance under such altered circumstances would be that furnished by the wisest of purely secular teachers. The same applies to Christ as an example. He is so to those that accept him in his own proper character and who view the world as he viewed it. In a purely secular scheme of life, the ideal that he holds forth must seem greatly overstrained" (p. 138).

\* "John Stuart Mill: a Criticism; with Personal Recollections." By Alex. Bain, LL.D. London: Longmans, 1882.

On the strength of certain well-known passages it has been asserted by Mill's opponents that at bottom he was a religious man. This, in their sense, is by no means the opinion of Prof. Bain. It is true he held the religion of humanity—aspirations and hopes for the future welfare of his race. But is this all that Christians means by religion? No! And, as our author remarks, "the fact remains that in everything characteristic of the creed of Christendom, he was a thorough-going negationist. He admitted neither its truth nor its utility." Thus speaks his eminent friend; the man most competent of all living men to declare an opinion concerning the beliefs and disbeliefs of John Stuart Mill.

J. M. WHEELER.

### CHRISTIAN HUMBUG.

CHRISTIANITY, like Toryism, is an organised hypocrisy. It lives, moves, and has its being in a region of sham and humbug. It is the gospel of buncombe, the sanctification of twaddle, the solemnisation of farcical absurdity. These are the elements which constitute the very essence of its vitality. Take them away from Christianity, together with its childish follies and gigantic immoralities, and there will be nothing remaining but a few truths which it has begged, borrowed, or stolen from other faiths. The professors of Christianity are oblivious of these facts, precisely because their policy is that of the hunted ostrich, which thinks, because it cannot see its pursuers, that they cannot see it. In like manner, Christians are only able to say that they believe the grotesque flummeries and barefaced humbug of their religion, because they bury their brains in the sands of superstition, and thus shut out their minds from the light of truth. "They love the darkness rather than the light because their deeds [and creeds] are evil." Knowing or fearing that the torch of reason exposes the ugly features of Christian doctrine, its intellectual stupidity and moral nothingness, to scorn and derision; the priests and the priestly-minded studiously pursue an owl-like policy, dreading to face the sunlight of Freethought.

The effect of these cowardly and sneaking tactics, this self-imposed mental emasculation, is illustrated in the fact that the mass of Christian believers fail to appreciate the moral consequences that should logically flow from the acceptance of Christianity. The bandage of self-deception, whereby their mental and moral vision are obscured, hides from their gaze the outrageous humbug which enters so largely into their professions of belief. A few instances will suffice to clearly explain our meaning.

I. The God whom Christians love and adore is depicted in the Bible with a character more bloodthirsty than that of a Bengal tiger or a Bashi-Bazouk. He is credited with all the vices and scarcely any of the virtues of a painted savage. Wanton cruelty and heartless barbarity are his essential characteristics. Now, if any despot at the present time tried to emulate at the expense of his subjects the misdeeds of Jehovah, the great majority of Christian men would denounce his conduct in tones of indignation. But it would be their humanity, not their Christianity, that would so prompt them. For, as Christians, they should rejoice whenever they behold their fellow-men walking in the footsteps and imitating the conduct of their God. Their condemnation of cruel God-like men is thus, in effect, a tacit condemnation of their cruel God, and demonstrates the fact that the professions of Christianity are mere humbug, bolstered up by self-deception and inconsistency.

II. The friends and favourites of Jehovah were a "fishy" set. You might boil the lot down without extracting an ounce of virtue from the whole crew. Lying and cheating, killing and adultery, were their principal accomplishments. Profligacy and piety, prayer and priggishness, were their chief amusements. Now, if a converted Chinaman were to set about saving his soul by cultivating the friendship of God in this manner, he would be classified as an "eccentric cuss" by the generality of Christians. The fact that God instigated or condoned these offences in the case of his "old pals" would not, in their opinion, justify his more modern friends in emulating their saintly example. Why a God who is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever," should have such a weathercock disposition surpasses our feeble comprehension. It would certainly appear from this inconsistency that piety to-day enjoys fewer perquisites, less privileges of crime and

plenary indulgences, than it did in the good old times. At any rate, Christians should pause before they venture to denounce those frail mortals who to-day commit the very crimes which God once on a time scandalously licenced for the special behoof of his chartered libertines "down in Judee," for such condemnation not only seriously reflects on the character of those godly men, but on that of the obliging Deity, who generously took the responsibility, and instigated the commission, of their crimes.

III. Christianity is professedly based on the teachings of the Bible. Christians swallow the miscellaneous contents of that inspired volume as greedily as the hungry whale did poor Jonah. Moved by the spirit of cant and humbug, they proclaim from the house-tops the praises of the Jew book. It is in their eyes the paragon of virtue, the pink of purity, the quintessence of morality. But what are the facts? Every crime is sanctioned, all kinds of profligacy are consecrated, every violation of morality instigated, in the pages of that book, either by the mouth of Jehovah, or by the commandment of his priests and prophets. The villainies perpetrated on the Egyptians and Canaanites, the putrid abominations sanctioned with respect to the fair daughters of Midian, the filthy orders piled up in such nasty passages as Genesis xxxviii., 9; 2 Kings ix., 8; and xviii., 27, which are only specimens of others too numerous and indelicate to mention, abundantly prove this charge. If the Christians should ever venture to make it an article of faith to imitate in their daily lives every act of villainy and filthiness which God inspired the Jewish saints of old to commit, or winked at when committed, most of the virtues would be conspicuous by their absence, and earth would become a veritable pandemonium. The unwillingness of Christians to follow the footsteps of the friends of God, and to be in all things like unto them, demonstrates the real humbug of Christianity, and the practical scepticism of the "true believers" concerning the utility of walking by faith and not by sight. *Autres temps, autres mœurs.* Abraham to-day, must not lie, Jacob may not cheat, Moses may not murder, Samuel may not assassinate, David may not perpetrate the basest treachery, the grossest immorality, and most fiendish cruelty; the elect may not set every principle of morality, mercy, and justice at defiance in their dealings with the gentiles and unbelievers, if they hope to become the friends of God, to play the golden harp, and live in mansions in the sky. At any rate, if they choose to go in for these sort of things, they must duly repent before they die, and thus square the matter with God and cheat the devil out of his own—both of which are obligations which apparently did not devolve upon the saints under the old régime.

IV. Christians, we are afraid, are deficient of that sound common-sense and exquisite appreciation of humor which are the sure concomitants of the sceptical mind; otherwise they would laugh outright at the grotesque eccentricity which they honor as their God. Their Deity is an arithmetical puzzle, a three-headed curiosity. Instead of hauling away Jumbo, we would advise Mr. Barnum to bid for the Christian Mumbo-Jumbo. A greater wonder, a more lasting attraction, could not be found in the heavens above, nor in the earth beneath, nor in the waters under the earth. Mumbo-Jumbo is his own father and his own son, but the father and the son are not two, but one. Yet the father is not the step-father nor the father-in-law of his son, but only the putative father. The real parent of this interesting child is another person altogether, 'yclept the Holy Ghost, who, we presume, sold his paternal rights to the other party for a mess of pottage, specially cooked and prepared by the Virgin Mary. The son, therefore, is not the Son of the Father—except he be his God-son. On that point Christian divines differ. The fact is, the Son has been merely fathered on to the Father, which being interpreted in the vulgar tongue means, that the Father was "kidded on;" and for this reason the young hopeful is called, even unto this day, the *Lamb of God*. This is the triangular Deity which Christians adore, the Baal before which they bend the knee in prayer, and to whom they lift the song of fulsome praise. They believe without thought, they accept without examining, "they deceive themselves, and the truth is not in them." Hence it is that their professions of faith are mere shams and pious humbug, and their creeds the crude symbols of mental abasement, the fruits of intellectual sterility. They fail to appreciate the folly and crime to which the logical carrying out of the principles of Christianity would lead. They either shut their eyes to the multitudinous elements of

absurdity, obscenity, and immorality which permeate their faith, or avoid every occasion of discovering the real truth "as it is in Jesus."

With these facts before our eyes it is not difficult to indicate the appropriate secular synonyms of theological nomenclature, for a candid examination will lay bare the fact that the true meaning of Christianity is cant, that faith is all fudge, belief sheer buncombe, sanctity a gigantic sham, and holiness nothing less than humbug. These blunt but veracious translations of the jargon terms and cant conventionalities of Christianity are justified by the fact that the great bulk of professing Christians have not the thorough intellectual honesty, the moral courage and straightforwardness, to look beneath the unsubstantial surface of the things of faith in search of the truth so long hidden from the people's eyes by the mystifying arts of designing priests. There is no gainsaying the fact that if "the faithful" would only bring to bear on things spiritual one tith of the common-sense and discrimination with which they judge concerning things secular, the priestly occupation would be soon gone, and the Christian religion, in common with its kindred superstitions, be speedily defunct. The fact, likewise, that Christians deliberately shut their eyes to the moral enormities and intellectual stupidities of their religion, and remain sublimely ignorant that they are dwelling in a fool's paradise, whilst building on fantastic hopes of heavenly bliss, merits for Christianity the reproach of being a snare, a delusion, and a sham.

WILLIAM HEAFORD.

## ACID DROPS.

THE *Protestant Standard* is a funny paper. It advises Protestants to throw overboard the Jonahs. Now Jonah was the only true believer on board the old craft he embarked in. Throw the godly overboard and save the ship! Yes, and leave it full of infidels from cabin to forecabin.

MR. SPURGEON'S congregation annually give up their Tabernacle to strangers for one Sunday. This year the 5,000 strangers were wofully disappointed: Mr. Spurgeon failed to put in an appearance, and sent his deputy, Mr. Fullerton, who gave an appropriate discourse on "Fools."

MRS. GIRLING, the head of the Shaker community, who are still located on the borders of the New Forest, has written a letter asserting that she is no less a person than a reincarnation of the Great Father, who has come again, making her body the abode of His second appearing, and that the print marks of the evidence of His former suffering now appear upon her body. She has been seen by a correspondent of the *Daily News*, who describes her as a most wonderful creature having "the hungry famished look in her eyes that tells its own tale of a half-starved body and a most disordered mind." He don't describe any "print marks." She has about sixty followers, everyone with a starved, wolfish, weird expression. Real faith in the present day is left to such fanatics as these, who are about the only Christians in England who are ready to suffer for the faith that is in them.

THE Rev. Hibbert Newton, D.D., vicar of St. Michael's, Southwark, has addressed a rabid letter to the Earl of Redesdale, in which he protests not only against Atheists sitting in Parliament, but also against "the Jew Bill." This antediluvian parson observes that "The Old Testament knows no God without God, the Son, who speaks all through both Testaments as 'the Word,' 'from the beginning.' The God of the wilfully Christ denying is a false God, and the true God is pledged to make all such, as 'enemies, Christ's 'footstool.'" We are well content that the true God and the false God shall fight it out with our old fossil parson as bottle-holder. We can't tell t'other from which, but may the best God win.

THE Earl of Crawford is a Spiritualist, and has been endeavoring to recover the stolen body of his father by means of clairvoyance. Of course a number of "me-jums" have had visions.

WE should recommend Miss Anna Kingsford, M.D., Spiritualist and Vegetarian, a little mutton by way of medicine. We fear that hard study and haricot beans are leading to brain softening. Dr. Anna has had "an internal revelation" and contributes the results to *Light*, under the title of "The Constitution of Man." Man it seems is fourfold, consisting of two inner principles, soul and spirit, and two outer, astral shade (whatever that may be) and body. She says, these four characters are familiar to us as Harlequin (the spirit), Columbine (the soul), these two representing the inner celestial dualism; Clown (the mundane spirit), and Pantaloon (the body), these two last representing the outer terrestrial dualism.

HERE is the whole philosophy of pantomime. It is obviously capable of much elaboration, and Dr. Anna doesn't omit to work it out. Columbine, the soul, is only powerful when she has the magic wand of Harlequin, the invisible spirit. Pantaloon, the poor old body, is terribly illused by Clown, the astral shade. Doubtless Dr. Anna can supply the symbolical meaning of the red-hot poker and long strings of sausages. If the Doctor persistently refuses to take mutton with her haricot, her friends will have to interfere to prevent the recurrence of such fearful "internal revelations."

AT a spiritual seance the other evening a gentleman requested the "me-jum" to ask what amusement was most popular in the spiritual world. The answer was, "Reading our own obituary notices."

THE Rev. Giles Hester, minister of the Baptist Church at Berkhamsted, has developed a suicidal mania, and has, in consequence, been removed to the lunatic asylum at Arlesley. Yet we are constantly told that scepticism is the path that leads to suicide.

THE *Christian World* declares that "although the Queen, when at Balmoral, attends the Established Church, those who reside upon the Royal domain are left perfectly free to worship wherever they please." What wonderful tolerance! We think of applying for a job on the Balmoral estates.

POOR Jules Simon is at his wits' end. In his paper, the *Gaulois*, he says: "As to the five-franc pieces on which are to be found the following words: 'Dieu protège la France,' the Government will wait before having them altered to see how many Freethinkers refuse them on account of that motto." Just let the said five-franc pieces be debased, and see how many Christians will take them, notwithstanding the pious motto. Good silver is current everywhere.

THE *Morning Post* prints a long circular from a pious committee formed to petition against an alteration of the parliamentary oath. They ask for subscriptions first, and promise work afterwards. That's always the clerical dodge.

A BILL prohibiting the dively-sanctioned institution of polygamy has been passed by the U.S. House of Representatives. The Mormons are naturally excited. A rumor is afloat that Brigham Young is still alive. Of course it finds believers among the faithful. Others say that another corpse was passed off as his, and that by claiming a resurrection he means to regain power over the people of Utah. The whole phenomena of Mormonism is instructive as to the combined power of audacity and credulity in propagating a religion.

SIR HENRY TYLER is at his old tricks again. He has asked the Home Secretary why Dr. Aveling a duly qualified teacher, is allowed to teach; and now he wants to know why Mr. Bradlaugh is not prosecuted for blasphemy. After Mr. Freshfield's snubbing in relation to the *Freethinker* it is surprising that anybody should be silly enough to re-open the question. But Sir Henry has a title loose.

NEWCASTLE is to have a Bishop, and a committee of ladies has been formed to raise the cash. Nearly every one of them is titled. The Bishop of Durham gives them his assistance. He is an excellent old lady himself.

A LADY entered the elephant house in the Zoo, a few days ago, and, falling on her knees, besought the Lord to spare England the national disgrace of Jumbo's removal. This is a very fair specimen of the Jew-Christian piety of the *Daily Gusher*.

SCENE, a newsagent's shop in the North of Scotland. Enter, a minister, who spies the *Freethinker* lying on the counter. "What," he exclaims, "do you sell this blasphemous print?" "Yes," answers the shopkeeper, "I'm obliged to suit all tastes to get a living."—"But this is really too awful."—"Well, sir, you can have the *War Cry* if you like."—Minister, while denouncing the *Freethinker*, quietly folds it up and puts down a bawbee to pay for it. That's how half-a-dozen ministers in the town buy the *Freethinker* every week.

SIR HENRY TYLER is a diligent observer of Freethought. He even reads the *National Reformer*, though he finds it "too horrible" to read in public. We intend to encourage his investigation into the Freethought movement by sending him gratis copies of the *Freethinker*.

THIS is how a Yankee preacher spoke on predestination: "Let us, for argument sake, grant that I, the Rev. Elder Sprightly, am fore-ordained to be drowned in the river at Smith's Ferry, next Thursday morning, at thirty minutes after ten o'clock—and suppose I know it—and suppose I am a free, moral, voluntary, and accountable agent—do you think I am going to be drowned? I should rather guess not. I should stay at home; and you'll never catch the Rev. Elder Sprightly at Smith's Ferry nohow—nor near the river neither."

SPECIAL NOTICE.

MR. FOOTE lectures three times to-day (Sunday, March 26th) at the Hall in Pelham Street, Nottingham. Morning, "Was Jesus Insane?" afternoon, "Great Christ is Dead!" evening, "Christianity Played Out." Monday evening, the 27th, Secular Hall, Leicester, on "Mr. Bradlaugh and the House of Commons."

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

April 2nd, Manchester; 3rd, Failsforth; 9th, Middleton's Hall, Birmingham; 16th, Hall of Science, London; 18th, Walworth; 19th, Hackney Workmen's Club; 23rd, Liverpool; 30th, Hall of Science, London.  
 May 14th, Plymouth; 28th, N. S. S. Conference.  
 June 4th, Glasgow; 11th and 18th, Claremont Hall, London.

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H. J. STEVENS.—We are quite prepared to believe that Spiritualists are very good people. So are plenty of Christians, Mohammedans, Buddhists and Parsees. Such a fact proves nothing as to the truth of their religious opinions. We are not prejudiced against Spiritualism. When it is proved to be true we shall believe it. It was never our fortune to see anything at a *séance* which could not be easily explained without the aid of spirits. If you have seen more, it may be evidence to you, but to us it is only hearsay. We have read the books you refer to, and ever so many others. Wallace's little volume is a treat to logicians. It shows how a man, who reasons rigorously on matters of physical science, can argue foolishly and accept anything as good evidence, when the question is a "spiritual" one.

T. LEWIS.—There is no legal obligation of the kind. Thanks for your attention, but the sheet is beneath notice; and to proceed against such an odious little creature for libel would be like prosecuting a flea for assault. We mean simply to go on with our work, and disregard the obscure people who are anxious for a free advertisement in our columns.

A. WAKEFIELD.—T. W. Rhys Davids gives the number of existing Buddhists at 500,000,000.

N. J. BAKER.—We look after the people you refer to. You had better distribute your copies among people in your own district. Many thanks.

D. GOODMAN.—Your criticism is sound enough, but a joke is a sacred thing. We cannot recommend any better plan than lending the *Freethinker* about. It is well, however, to order a few extra copies through any newsagent who will exhibit them for sale on condition that you take any that are unsold.

H. BEE.—(1.) Rossetti's edition. The four volume edition is that of Chatto & Windus. It contains some prose works. (2.) There are several English editions of W. C. Bryant's poems. One, finely illustrated, is published by Sampson Low & Co.; but the author's edition, published by H. S. King & Co. at 3s. 6d., will doubtless suit your purpose. (3.) Tennyson's line reads: "Till the war-drum throbbed no longer." It occurs in "Locksley Hall," line 115.

JOSEPH GIBSON.—Thanks for cuttings.

DONKEYS who waste time and cash in sending us anonymous abuse would do better to devote the same to the support of their families.

TUTOR assures us he can no more do without his *Freethinker* than without his daily paper. We thank "Tutor" for his cuttings.

YOUNG SCEPTIC.—Thanks for weekly paper.

DUTCH OVEN.—Thanks. We are not surprised at your liking it warm.

Y. Z., Blackpool.—Thanks.

NO SCHOLAR.—The Hebrew vowel-points do not represent the original pronunciation, but the traditional pronunciation of a time when the language had ceased to be spoken. The Phœnician and Assyrian characters are far older than the Hebrew. No existing MS. of the Old Testament dates earlier than the ninth century after Jesus.

CATO.—It has been computed that there are 175 sects in England.

SOCIUS.—Hospitals were founded in Hindostan by Asoka, the Buddhist king, who lived in the third century B.C. The first public hospital in Christendom was founded in the fourth century after Christ, by a Roman lady, Fabiola. Mr. Symes has a pamphlet on the subject. He gives evidence that public dispensaries were known both in Egypt and Greece long prior to the Christian era.

KARL VON MARCHMANN-LICHTENBELLE.—The expression of your esteem gives us sincere pleasure.

SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. SYMES'S Secular School at Birmingham has room for a few more pupils. Freethought parents, who want to give their children a good wholesome training, should send them to Mr. Symes, who will teach them what they ought to remember without mixing it up with what they ought to forget.

Nature gives some interesting particulars about literature in Japan. No less than 4,910 works were published last year, many

being translations of standard European and American works. Among the names of those given we notice none of a theological character, but several well known freethought works, such as Mill's "Three Essays on Religion," Draper's "Conflict of Religion and Science," and Buckle's "History of Civilisation." This is encouraging. Christian missions will have little success in Japan when the natives are awakened to the fact that the leading minds in Christian lands are leaving Christianity.

SHADWORTH HODGSON, LL.D., in his recently published volume "Outcast Essays and Verse Translations," says Pantheism, "is not only a necessity of thought, but Christianity itself is Pantheistic." Of course Dr. Hodgson denies the peculiar Christian dogmas of the Incarnation, the Atonement, Heaven and Hell, and the Day of Judgment. These beliefs he classes among "the fictitious supernatural."

THE *Christian Commonwealth* has had all sorts of letters assigning all sorts of reasons why the people do not attend public worship. One of the most sensible, which they have the impertinence to head "What an Infidel says," is from F. J. Gould, who assigns six causes, but places "first and foremost the spread of Secular creeds by meetings, publications, and scientific teaching." Mr. Gould's letter will compare favorably with any of those contributed by the Christian bishops upon this, to them, important question.

FRENCH Freethinkers are taking up their legitimate position as one of the most important sections of the community. No less than twenty members of the Chamber of Deputies, besides numerous municipal councillors, attended at their recent demonstration at the Elysee Montmartre, and, in consequence of the energetic action of Parisian jurymen, M. Humbert has found it necessary to bring in an urgency bill for the total abolition of oaths both for witnesses and jury. It is now very rarely indeed that jurymen can be obtained, the whole of whom are willing to subscribe to a religious form of oath.

LORD SHAFTESBURY states his belief that not more than two per cent. of the recognised working class go to any ordinary place of worship. What an admission of the failure of Christianity! It has its hold mainly on the shop-keeping class, a large number of whom attend church out of fear of Mrs. Grundy.

THE little children in the city of Glasgow may be seen any day perambulating about four deep, in imitation of the Salvation Army, with a little leader walking backwards, leaping and beating time to some of the Army's liveliest tunes. The other day, in the Western district, a little band of five year olds were singing out to a hymn tune as loud as they could bawl:—

"You cannot go to heaven on high,  
 Unless you've on a collar and tie."

Evidently such "profanity" and "blasphemy" cometh only from the devil, yet "out of the mouths of babes and sucklings," etc. Great is the mystery of godliness.

THE *Truthseeker* (N. Y.) has a strong leader on the Bradlaugh question. It says: "Upon the issue of the contest depends the question of whether England is a free country, with representatives in Parliament elected by the people, or whether she is a country ruled by an aristocracy as dangerous to her liberties as the autocratic Government of Russia."

POMEROY'S paper (U.S.) throws this brick at hypocrites: "Church members may bang away against theatres, but we are quite certain that an actor or actress, who affords enjoyment to thousands of tired, worn, weary persons, does more good than do one thousand long-faced, whining, hell-fearing followers of priestcraft, who were happy, and who made others happy, till religion made them miserable, or apparently so."

At the St. James's Hall meeting of the National Sunday League, last Monday, resolutions affirming the desirability of opening the public museums on Sundays were passed unanimously. Sir A. Hobhouse said that if it is desirable to shut them on one day of the week let it be any day but Sunday. Lord Thurlow stated that a measure would have been passed by the Lords but for the opposition of Lord Shaftesbury. Those who know the history of the individual, so admirably satirized by Brough in his ballad, "The Earl of Whitechokerlea," know that, like most professed philanthropists, his good doings are surface-sham, hiding a core of rotten bigotry.

THE following card has been widely distributed in Bombay during and since the visit of that arch-humbog, Joe Cook:— "The native public of Bombay take this opportunity to thank Mr. Joseph Cook for the trouble he has taken to come to Bombay and preach Christianity to the English-speaking natives and European residents of this great city. But at the same time they think it proper to inform the reverend gentleman that he should not leave them with the idea that his eloquent but flimsy, unargumentative, and merely rhetorical lectures, have produced any impression whatsoever on their minds with respect to the truth of Christianity. Many flocked to his lectures merely to witness the magnificent *tamasha* [show]. Hence the large numbers

of hearers he succeeded in obtaining. Let him and his colleagues rest assured that Christianity will never succeed in India. Nothing more need be said.—NATIVE PUBLIC VOICE." The courteous but astute Hindus evidently see through Joseph's clap-trap.

THE Glasgow Freethinkers have at last secured better premises. They will shortly enter into occupation, and we trust that the committee will be cordially supported in their new venture. Glasgow offers a fine field for Freethought propaganda and organisation.

SEVERAL Salvationists were apprehended last Sunday for violating the magistrates' injunction against their street processions. We are glad to see this energetic step taken at last. The street belongs to the public, and no section should be allowed to become a nuisance to others.

A GIBRALTAR correspondent sends us the following translation from a Spanish paper, and vouches for the statements:—"How Bishops are installed in Gibraltar, March 2nd, 1882." Streets and approaches to Cathedral lined with Protestant soldiers fully armed. Two Gatling guns in Governor's garden; two Gatling guns in Grand Stores; battery of field guns, manned just outside town. Batteries commanding the town, manned. All the gates closed. Shops shut. The sea-wall guns turned round so as to menace the town. Peaceable inhabitants not allowed to circulate. Some imprisoned in their houses. The Bishop elect approaches in a Hack car (car since boycotted), and on the road, seeing the preparations made for him, he is taken, as was M. Thiers, on the night of the *coup d'etat*, so that his experience of the episcopal chair is that it is a very soft one. The Bishop (Roman Catholic) having been installed at the point of the Protestant bayonet, the scene closes.

THE Dundee Freethinkers are having very good meetings just now, and there is a large weekly sale of Freethought literature in the town. They will succeed and become a strong body if they keep united, and refrain from sharing in quarrels which do not concern them.

A WELL-KNOWN newsagent in Glasgow was waited on by a deputation who requested him to cease selling Ingersoll's lectures. He answered that he would do so if they recompensed him for his loss of profit. A truly Scotch answer! They vanished, and he heard of them no more.

#### A PRAYER MEETING IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

I HAD a dream. And in my dream I found myself in the House of Commons. As I entered Mr. Moody was preaching, just concluding his sermon, in fact; and was exhorting his audience to "hold fast whereunto they had attained, so that no man might take their crowns."

Brother Sankey then sang to the harmonium, "Hold the fort," which Mr. Moody in a running comment applied to the Bradlaugh case, and entreated his hearers to stand manfully by the oath, reminding them how fond Jesus was of swearing in the days of his flesh. He then called upon brothers Newdegate and Northcote to engage in prayer. Brother N. proceeded to do so, thusly:—"O! Lord God, Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and hell, thou blessed Trinity (D. Wolff, *sotto voce*, — the Trinity, say I), hear our united prayers. We are sinful creatures, 'we have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep,' (a profane M.P., audibly, 'True! true! like lost donkeys, indeed'), and there is no health in us. Have mercy upon us, O God, miserable offenders ('Yes! — you! — you! you offended against law and justice in Bradlaugh's case,' growls the profane M.P.). Bless us who hate Bradlaugh, and curse them who favor him. 'Curse ye Meroz, curse ye bitterly Meroz ('That's the Government,' says R. Churchill), because they came not up to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.' (Profane M.P., 'Dear me! Bradlaugh ought to be ashamed of himself to set upon a poor weakling like the Lord of Hosts!') 'Curse thou their basket and their store,' and let their devices and Bills come to nought. But bless me; and so order it that I may get the £500 and all my expenses paid. And thou shalt have all the glory, through thy only son, Jesus Christ, Our Lord, Amen." (D. Wolff, "Curse that Nazarene.")

Brother Northcote said, "Good God, answer the prayer of my hon. friend, in the sentiments of which I entirely concur. Break up this present ungodly Government, O Lord, and set us up in their room. Then shall we shout for joy, and thine altars, in all parts of the world, shall smoke again with the warm blood of our enemies, who are also

thine enemies. Do thou spare the life of Bradlaugh! To us thy unworthy servants (Profane M.P., 'very unworthy!'), he is a god-send. Make us wise to understand our opportunities, and to employ them for the honor of thy name and the confusion of Gladstone. Amen."

Mr. Moody then proposed that there should be an experience meeting. Suddenly up rose Brother R. Churchill, who said he blessed the Lord for bringing him to that glorious meeting. He had had doubts and fears lately (Profane M.P., "Yes! — you! about the pension of your family!"); but now his mind was quite clear; in a word, he felt "safe in the arms of Jesus."

Suddenly up rose a High Church M.P. who had just arrived, and put a question to the Speaker—"I beg to ask, sir, by whose orders or whose invitation these two rabid Dissenting Revivalists are brought in to desecrate this House?"

"Hereat up rose a hot Dissenter, and asked if it was in order for any hon. gentlemen to insult Dissenters. For his part, he could see very little difference between the High Church party and the Papists, the Scarlet woman of the Revelation."

"Order! order!" cried all the Roman Catholics, while one of them ventured to suggest that a sect which renounced the Pope and run away with all the Church's wealth, as they did at the so-called Reformation, was a set of wretches no better than Jews."

Up jumped a Jew, and begged to scorn and repudiate the base insinuation of the hon. and Papistical member. And he fiercely demanded whether a man could be in his right senses who believed in the trinity in unity and in transubstantiation!

Mr. Newdegate entreated hon. gentlemen to forget differences just now, and unite to exclude the Atheist.

"Yes!" retorted a Papist; "and as soon as you have disposed of Bradlaugh you will recommence your life-long abuse of Roman Catholics. I would as soon have an Atheist here as you. You deny the Pope, and that is as bad as to deny God." ("Worse, worse!" shouted several Catholics.)

A Unitarian here arose, and coolly remarked that he saw little difference between one idolator and another. He felt as much respect for the Papist who worshipped the Virgin Mary, as for the Protestant who worshipped her son.

"Order!" shouted a Trinitarian. "You Unitarians and Jews are almost as bad as Atheists, for you renounce just two-thirds of my God, and I renounce you, and hand you over to the tender mercies of that Blessed Lamb whom you despise!"

Up rose another Jew, and sarcastically observed that his fathers sacrificed both pigeons and lambs to God; but you Christians worship them. For my part, I consider that he who adds two whole wings to the infinite godhead—viz., the Son or Lamb, and the Holy Ghost or pigeon, is very little better than an Atheist."

Here followed a scene of indescribable confusion. Jews, Christians, Papists, Churchmen, high and low, Dissenters, Unitarians, and Quakers, all plunged into a desperate fight, each party shouting their own war-cry—"The God of Abraham," screamed the Jews—"God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost," roared the Trinitarians—"The Virgin, the Pope! St. Patrick and Purgatory!" vociferated the Catholics.—"No Popery!" shouted Mr. Newdegate.—And the air rang with the edifying cries of Blasphemer! Jew! Judas! Papist! Idolator! Thief! Murderer! Coward! Atheist! We'll send you to prison! We'll roast you! We'll — you!" . . . . From words they proceeded to blows, and fought as only fanatics can. When they had done, the heterogeneous majority who persecuted Bradlaugh were like the Kilkenny cats after their famous fight—there was not even a fragment left. . . .

I thought this an exceedingly favorable time to awake, when, behold, it was all a dream.

Ay! Ay!—But that is just how the fanatics would really fight, were they not restrained by secular forces and considerations. As long as men are religious they will be more or less mad. We must wage exterminating warfare against all religions. The world will never be safe till they are dead.

J. SYMES.

A LITTLE American girl, being informed by her mother that she was to go on a journey next day, made the following addition to her evening prayer, "Good-bye, God! good-bye, Jesus! I'm going to Chicago in the morning."

CHRISTIAN INCONSISTENCIES.

If the "Heathen Chinese," after listening to the talkee-talkie of the missionary, who in glowing language had been telling him of his wonderful religion, and how happy England was in consequence of having the Bible and being Christian, had made up his mind to visit our shores and see this heaven upon earth, and how its people keep their holy faith, he would doubtless be much surprised and disappointed. Upon landing, his first experience, if he arrived, say, in Christmas week, would be the sight of people roving about the streets, shouting and singing in a very vehement manner, many in a state of drunkenness. Upon inquiring as to the meaning of this, he would be told that they were celebrating the birth of one of their gods, named Jesus Christ. Upon further investigation he would be informed that this event was the most important that ever happened, for upon that depended the eternal welfare of the whole human race; although the people, as a rule, think as little as possible of this great event, looking upon it only as a time of pleasure, for eating and drinking to excess, whereby some get to fighting and other kinds of misbehavior, and visiting various places of amusement, singing songs of a very worldly nature, playing cards, etc.

If our Celestial were to remain some four months longer, he would be aware that another anniversary called Good Friday had arrived. He would notice the majority of shops closed, and, upon inquiry, he would be informed it was on account of the death of the God whose birth he had previously seen so curiously celebrated, and would be told that this was the climax of a great scheme of the God's father to save the creatures whom he had made from being punished by him, for what they had never done, in a great fire for ever and ever. In having escaped so dreadful a fate he would naturally think some decency would be shown on this day, but he would find all treated it with supreme contempt by doing such things as they had scruples in doing on another day called Sunday—such as washing their shop-fronts, painting their shutters, etc., and winding up by going to wrestling and boxing matches, or to music-halls to listen to coarse and vulgar songs. His marvel at the Christians would be still greater when, two days later, another festival called Easter Sunday, when this God got out of his grave and went up into the clouds, is celebrated, also the greater part of the following week in the same manner. And finally, if he prolonged his stay for some seven weeks more, he would find this pious and holy nation celebrating in the same way another sacred time called Whitsuntide, in commemoration of the appearance of a near relation of the above Father and Son, called the Holy Ghost. Upon returning to the "Flowery Land," and relating his experiences, he and his countrymen would think the Christians the most inconsistent and hypocritical people on the face of the earth.

CHAS. BENTLEY.

FREETHOUGHT GLEANINGS.

THE CHURCH AND SLAVERY.—What witness, then, has as yet been borne by the Church in these slave states against this almost universal sin? How has she fulfilled her vocation? She raises no voice against the predominant evil; she palliates it in theory, and in practice she shares in it. The mildest and most conscientious of the bishops of the South are slaveholders themselves.—*Samuel Wilberforce*, "History of the Protestant Episcopal Church in America," p. 421.

IBID.—And what has been her conduct? If we seek to test her real power over men's hearts by asking what her influence has been, we shall rate it low indeed. No voice has come forth from her. The bishops of the North sit in open convention with their slaveholding brethren, and no canon proclaims it contrary to the discipline of their church to hold property in man and to treat him as a chattel.—*Samuel Wilberforce*, "History of the Protestant Episcopal Church in America," p. 426.

IBID.—The churches show the same thing; they are also in the main pro-slavery, at least not anti-slavery. There are some forty denominations or sects in New England. Mr. President; is one of these anti-slavery? Not one. The land is full of ministers, respectable men, educated men—are they opposed to slavery? I do not know a single man, eminent in any sect, who is also eminent in his opposition to slavery.—*Theodore Parker*, "Works," vol. v., p. 96. Trübner, 1863.

IBID.—Yet of this system (slavery) the Episcopal church is a mighty buttress, and certain of her bishops its reckless and unblushing champions.—*Jay*, "Miscellaneous Writings on Slavery," Boston, 1853, p. 430.

WHAT IS SPIRIT?—What is Spirit? What are our own minds? The portion of spirit with which we are best acquainted. We observe certain phenomena. We cannot explain them into material causes. We therefore infer that there exists something

that is not material. But of this something we have no idea. We can define it only by negatives. We can reason about it only by symbols. We use the word; but we have no image of the thing. . . . Logicians may reason about abstractions. But the great mass of men must have images. The strong tendency of the multitude in all ages and nations to idolatry can be explained on no other principle. The first inhabitants of Greece, there is reason to believe, worshipped one invisible deity. But the necessity of having something more definite to adore produced, in a few centuries, the innumerable crowd of gods and goddesses.—*Macaulay*, "Essay on Milton," p. 10.

THE CHRISTIAN MIRACLES.—We shall presently see the condition of the people amongst whom these miracles are supposed to have occurred, and that, so far from the nature of the phenomena, and the character of the witnesses, supporting the inference that it was impossible that the observers could have been deceived, there is every reason for concluding with certainty that their ignorance of natural laws, their proneness to superstition, their love of the marvellous, and their extreme religious excitement, rendered them peculiarly liable to incorrectness in the observation of the phenomena, and to error in the inferences drawn from them. We shall likewise see that we have no serious and circumstantial accounts of those miracles from eye-witnesses of whose probity and good sense we have any knowledge, but that, on the contrary, the narratives of them which we possess were composed by unknown persons, who were not eye-witnesses at all, but wrote very long after the events related, and in that mythic period "in which reality melted into fable, and invention unconsciously trespassed on the province of history."—"Supernatural Religion," p. 92, vol. i., 1879.

PROFANE JOKES.

A WELSH minister, after an evening with a jovial friend, returned home rather tired and less under the influence of the Holy Spirit than that of his entertainer. Instead of his usual lengthy prayer, he agreeably surprised his family by contenting himself with the following. "Got pless us, Got shave us, Got shent us a good night's rest! Few worts is pest. Goot night, Got Amighty, Goot night!"

PARSON, to boys playing on Sunday: "Boys, do you know what day this is?" "Heigho, Billy, here's a lark! Here's a cove as has been out all night, and don't know what day it is."

A RAW-BONED Yankee, meeting a Jew hurrying up Broadway, deliberately knocked him down. Scrambling to his feet, the assaulted Israelite demanded, "What dat was for?" "Why," said Jonathan, "you are one of them fellows that crucified my Savior, aint you?" "Oh, mine God! dat was two thousand years ago," remonstrated the unlucky Hebrew. "It doesn't matter a —," retorted the imperturbable Yankee; "I never heard of it till to-day."

THE DEVIL IS IN IT.—A clergyman of "indefinable" character, going to say prayers, had great difficulty in putting on his surplice. "I think," said he to the clerk, "the devil is in the surplice." The astonished clerk stared till he got it on, and then exclaimed, "I think he is, sir!"

It is said that an edition of the New Testament was printed with Paul's advice given as, "Bray without ceasing." This, at any rate, is evidently adopted as the correct version by most Christian ministers.

A PARSON was asked to read the following notice: "A man having gone to sea, his wife desires the prayers of the Church." Unheeding the punctuation, the white-chokered sky-pilot gravely told the congregation that "a man having gone to see his wife, desires the prayers of the Church."

BIBLIANA.—Give some particulars concerning Nebuchadnezzar? Nebuchadnezzar was king of Babylon. He stood six cubits high, and the weight of his coat was five thousand shekels of brass, and the staff of his spear was like a weaver's beam. He set up an image of a golden calf. And that same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote on his wall, "Minnie, Minnie, tickle the parson;" which being interpreted, meaneth, "Many are called but few chosen." He thereupon broke Israel's bones, and carried the Jews into captivity; wherefore the Lord made him eat grass, and smote Egypt in his first-born, for his mercy endureth for ever.

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