

THE
FREETHINKER

CHRISTMAS NUMBER



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CHRISTMAS THREE THOUSAND YEARS AGO.

"Iban...had thirty sons and thirty daughters."—JUDGES XII, 8, 9.

An Imaginary Conversatoin

BETWEEN

Michael and Satan.

Satan.—Well met, my dear Michael! You and I are old acquaintances. What ages have rolled by since we conversed as friends in Heaven! You remember the day when I broached to you my design of establishing a celestial Republic, and found it impossible to overcome your loyalty or your fears. You remember also that later day when the courts of Heaven rang with the shouts of battle; when, deserted by all but the sterner spirits who scorned flight or surrender, I and my little band of faithful rebels were hemmed in by the holy squadrons, seized one by one, and flung over the battlements.

Michael.—Yes, I recollect it well. I see now the look of deathless pride you wore. You wear it still. But there is mixed with it another expression I seldom see in Heaven. Humor lurks in the depth of your eyes and about the corners of your mouth.

S.—Yes, my dear Michael, it is the sovereign lenitive of an incurable pain. After writhing for milleniums

under the tender mercies of the Despot, I found a diversion in watching the antics of his creatures. Products of infinite wisdom as they are, they furnish me with infinite amusement.

M.—Wicked rebel! You insult the Maker and Ruler of all.

S.—Come now, why should we fall out? We used no railing when we disputed over the dead body of Moses; and, as the English poet, Byron, told the world, we civilly conducted our contest over the soul of George the Third. Why be uncivil now? You have my place in Heaven; surely you can afford to be civil, if not magnanimous.

M.—With difficulty does a loyal subject restrain himself before a plotter of treason.

S.—I see the Lord's omniscience does not extend to his Prime Minister. I plot no treason, Michael. I am a poor exile who no longer troubles himself about politics.

M.—Ever since the Lord created man you have been spoiling his handiwork, and leading souls to Hell.

S.—I neither made Hell nor do I people it. The Lord creates both good and evil; joy and pain are alike his gifts. Were he to exert his omnipotence, my establishment might be emptied to-morrow. It is

rash, if not something worse, to blame me for what he permits, nay *wills*.

M.—Did you not begin your machinations in the Garden of Eden, by tempting two poor innocent creatures, who would otherwise have lived there till now, tending its flowers, and eating of all its delicious fruits save those forbidden?

S.—My dear Michael, you were never a subtle reasoner. You have the qualities of a soldier, not those of a casuist. Pray consider. Did I create the forbidden fruit? Did I create an appetite for it in Adam and Eve? All I did was to demonstrate the carelessness of their Maker.

M.—Such language is profane. Whatever you did was at the expense of those hapless creatures.

S.—They might say so, but the words are strange in the mouth of an archangel. I was only experimenting. The omniscient Maker should have protected his children.

M.—He made them liable to temptation, in order to test their virtue; and gave them free-will so that they might act from choice.

S.—Then I was necessary to the plan. I also acted from choice, yet over them and me there was a divine necessity.

M.—I will not argue. Reason leads to the shipwreck of faith. I say your conduct was wicked and cruel.

S.—Wicked, if you like—that is a matter of opinion, on which we shall never agree—but not cruel. I visited Adam and Eve out of pure good-nature, mingled, I own, with a little curiosity. Poor Eve was naked; and I knew how much happier she would be with clothes. Her daughters owe me thanks for all their bewitching graces. Poor Adam was a simpleton. He ate and drank, and prayed and slept. Their life was monotonous, and would soon have been miserable. I gave them the fruit of the tree of Knowledge, and from it sprang all the arts and sciences, all literature, and all the pleasures of human society.

M.—What are all the pleasures and refinements of the world in comparison with the prospects of an immortal soul? They are but the dust on the road to Hell.

S.—Perhaps so, but that is not my fault. I did not foresee the Lord's malignity. As a rebel—wicked or otherwise—I tried to dethrone him, and my doom, if not just, is at least intelligible. But I never conceived he would curse the unborn, punish billions for the sin of one, and damn his children through all eternity for a single act of disobedience in their earthly life. Nor indeed did I imagine they *had* immortal souls to be saved or damned. That they were higher than the other animals was manifest, but I saw no indication that they differed in kind. Nor when they were cursed did I suspect it, for the Tyrant said nothing of a future life. I assure you, Michael, I was all attention, for the curse upon the serpent did not terrify *me*. Nor indeed could *any* curse have given me alarm. One who is being burnt at the stake does not fear a box of matches flung into the flames.

M.—Your wily tongue would prove black to be white. I leave the Fall of Man and pass to your next act of wickedness in tempting David to number his people.

S.—The Lord himself tempted David, as you may read in his own book.

M.—I refer to another verse which says that *you* did it.

S.—Two contradictions, my dear Michael, cannot both be true; and if you choose one, pardon me for choosing the other. Besides, if I did advise David on that occasion—which I deny—how could I foresee that so useful an act as taking a census would be punished by wholesale slaughter?

M.—Did you not tempt Job?

S.—Not I. I gave the Lord a new idea, which staggered his omniscience; and during the trial of Job I only acted on commission.

M.—Did you not tempt the blessed Savior himself?

S.—My dear Michael, it was but a diversion. We understood each other. I knew I could not succeed, and he knew that I knew it.

M.—Did you not enter into the bodies of men and women, and torment them?

S.—Never. I am incapable of such cruel frivolity.

M.—God's holy Word declares you guilty.

S.—I challenge the writer—who was not God—to the proof. It was another species of devil, created after my fall, and by the Lord himself I did not make them, and I will not be responsible for their doings. Can you conceive me taking up my residence in lunatics, and shifting into the bodies of pigs? There are very few of the human species, my dear Michael—to say nothing of pigs—with whom I deign to be familiar.

M.—Then you are very much belied. According to my information, you are the great Tempter, and every sin in the world is done at your suggestion.

S.—Such is the charity of mankind! It is so pleasant to blame another for their misdeeds! Is it I that tempt the drunkard, the thief, the adulterer, the murderer—or his own evil passions? for which let him thank his Maker! Pursue your enquiries, my dear Michael, and you will find Bishops brewing beer, and taking the chair at Temperance meetings. For my part, I drink nothing but water. It is best for my complaint.

M.—Can I believe you? You are called the Father of Lies.

S.—In calling me so, the Christians, at least, are only setting up a foundling hospital for their own progeny. You have the Scripture; show me a single occasion on which I lied. When the Lord wanted a liar to deceive King Ahab, he never troubled me; he found a volunteer at his elbow.

M.—I declare you are posing as an archangel. You forget that you are fallen. I am speaking with the Devil.

S.—Hard words break no bones, and if they did, I have none to be broken. I am fallen—from Heaven! which I have little desire to regain, peopled as it is with slaves and cowards. I would have sent a breath of freedom through its courts. I tried, I failed, and I paid the penalty of my daring.

M.—I will not rail at you. You are under a heavier curse than mine. But pray tell me who are the members of the human race with whom you deign to be familiar?

S.—I animate all who fight against servitude and somnolence. The heroes and martyrs of liberty and progress in every age have drunk of the strength of my spirit. I inspire the revolter, the scorner, the sceptic, the satirist. I still distribute the fruit of the tree of knowledge. I am the soul of the World. The fire of my inspiration may consume, but it gives unspeakable rapture. I am the Prometheus of the universe, and I keep it from stagnating under the icy hand of power. Milton, Goethe, and Byron made me the hero of their greatest poems, and felt my power in despite of themselves. Burns spoke of me with a tenderness he never displayed towards God. Wits and humorists own my sway. I moved the minds of Aristophanes and Lucian, of Erasmus and Rabelais, and through the pen of Voltaire I shattered the mental slavery of Europe. I am the lightning of the human mind. I level thrones and altars, and annihilate blinding customs. With the goad of a restless aspiration I urge men on, until they outgrow faith and fear, until the Slave stands erect before the Tyrant and defies his curse.

M.—I will not stay to hear you. A feeling creeps through me like that I experienced when you first tempted me to break my allegiance to Heaven. Farewell. I must report these things above.

S.—Report them! They are there already. You forget the Lord's omniscience, which is a dogma in Heaven, and a much contested one on Earth. Adieu, Michael. Pay my respects to your Master. And when you lead the chorus of flattery, think of the "wicked rebel" who prefers freedom in Hell to slavery in Heaven.

G. W. FOOTE.

Youthful Skeptic: "Say, Edna, do you believe that story about Adam and Eve and the snake and the Garden of Eden?" "Why, Agnes! of course I do." "Well, I don't! And nothing will ever make me believe that God made women wear clothes as a punishment."

A Conversation with Deity.

"PREPARE TO MEET THY GOD."—Such was the announcement which greeted me at Epsom on my trip to the Derby. "Is he on the racecourse?" I asked the melancholy Methodist who held the placard, but he only gave me a look of horror, and in Scripture language, shook off the dust from his feet. I looked, but could not see any God.

"Prepare to meet thy God."—The words were written in big letters on a house a little past Fratton Station as I slowed into Portsmouth, on a short visit to the sea-side. And there, sure enough, on the platform was waiting as good a specimen of a God as one need wish to see—an honest, manly, truth-loving and warm-hearted friend.

"Prepare to meet thy God," said frequently to me a pious Presbyterian of my acquaintance. "You will meet him some day and stop short in your career of infidelity. Mark my words. You will meet with God and be converted, and I should not wonder if it happens before very long."

"If I do I'll let you know."

It was not long before I met my pious friend, who I saw was ready to begin the old attack. But this time I determined to anticipate him.

"Well, Sandy," said I, "I have seen God."

"And he has converted you?" said my friend.

"Not at all. On the contrary."

"On the contrary! What do you mean?"

"What I say. Wait, and I will tell you all that happened. The other night I went to bed thinking of what you had promised, that I should see God. I asked myself how could it be possible that an infinite being could reveal himself to man, how, even if such a communication was ever made, one could be assured that he was not laboring under a delusion. In short, all the arguments against God revealing himself to me seemed as strong as ever, and *à fortiori* against his having revealed something to somebody else instead of letting me know his will personally."

"But all these arguments broke down by God's grace."

"Not exactly. I felt quite satisfied, and was just dozing to sleep."

"It seemed to me that I had scarcely closed my eyes when a presence made itself felt, and opening them, I beheld before me God the Father in person. I was quite sure of it. It was not so much the bald head and long flowing white beard, the blue robe, naked feet and general aspect as of a Jewish patriarch, but the something which in dreams and visions gives assurance of personality. I was convinced I had to do with God himself. Internally I felt an under-current of rational objections against the existence of any such being, but this was nothing against the evidence of my senses. His eyes were fixed on me with a stern regard. I felt I was being judged. Were those theologians wrong, then, who said that sentence is not delivered till the Judgment Day? You are an infidel, he seemed to say. All I could think was—Thou knowest that at any rate I am not a lazy one. This year, for instance, I have, in addition to my weekly work, compelled the lives of some sixteen hundred Freethinkers—no light task. "But my work," he sternly interrupted. "Look at the millions of beings I have brought into existence." "I wouldn't do it if I were you," said I.

"And why not?" asked *le bon Dieu*.

"I could not take the responsibility. I am sufficiently content with my own life and would even live it all over again, but when I look on the lot of the mass of my earthly fellow beings, not forgetting those we call the lower animals, I certainly would not change positions with you."

"Am I not revered as Almighty and all bountiful?"

"Have then the flatteries of those who seek their gain at your hands so cajoled you that you do not see that the evil we suffer is incompatible with these attributes? Have you never heard the dilemma of Epicurus:—Either the gods are not all good or not all-powerful, or there is no evil?"

"And what if there is none?" asked the Father.

"But there is evil. I speak not only of the heartache and the thousand natural ills that flesh is heir to—the diseases, wars, pestilences, floods and famines, by which the race is decimated—the whole system of your creation is based on the crushing out of the weakest, and will you tell me that the sufferings of all these so crushed is compensated for by the success of those who survive? Were you not happy in your divine solitude that you made others to endure the pangs of frustrate hopes and separation from the beloved? However tired you might be of your monstrous self-contemplation, was that not better than producing sentient beings to suffer, and the mass of mankind to be doomed to damnation? Frankly now, would you do it all over again:—Make a new Adam, to fall again by a new apple, casting all his posterity to perdition, until you should again have your own son crucified to save a few elected to believe on him?"

"You pity the damned, but you forget they deserve their fate. I gave them free will."

"Did you not then perceive the consequences of your gift? Would you exonerate yourself from giving your children poison, which you knew would be used for purposes of destruction, by saying it might be employed medicinally? What is free will compared to Almighty Power?"

"Would you have me make man a machine incapable of going wrong?"

"How about your elect in heaven? Can they slip down to hell, or are they but machines?"

"If I made man, it was from goodness and to glorify myself."

"What goodness is there in blessing a few and in damning millions? If you desire to be glorified by all, then make all happy; for until you do so you will have no glorification from me. Surely, it were better to save all than to elect a few to salvation. Indeed, I should not hold you worthy of praise if you permitted but one single being of your creation to be eternally damned."

"But my immutable decrees."

"Good god, what nonsense! Everything changes; and, thanks to man's Providence, there is such a thing as progress. Just show yourself a better God than your worshippers ever thought you."

The Father here seemed to be considering my advice, and appeared on the point of relenting, when suddenly my clock alarm sounded, and I instinctively jumped out of bed to find that God had vanished, and that it was morning.

"So you see, Sandy," concluded I, "that, so far from being converted by my interview with Deity, I appear to have rather converted God himself, and dinna ye hae the presumption to question the possibility of Divine improvement."

J. M. WHEELER.

In Galilee.

At Cana when the sun was low,
Josh Greasy to a spree did go;
It was a marriage feast and so
The guests were drinking heartily.

His mother said, "The drink is done,
I think we'd better trot off home."
"Woman, my hour is not yet come,
I mean to keep on steadily."

"So fetch the water-pots," said he,
"And fill them up, and you will see,
We yet shall have a jolly spree
By aid of magic palmistry."

Six water-pots they brought to him,
And filled them up right to the brim;
With water, quite enough to swim
The entire wedding company.

He turned it into wine, a trick
He learnt in Egypt from Old Nick.
They drunk so much they all got sick,
And all through Josh's foolery.



A LARGE FAMILY—FOR A VIRGIN.

“Is not this the carpenter’s son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us?”—MATTHEW XIII., 55, 56.

BARNUM OUTRIVALLED.

JAHVEH ELOHIM, Proprietor of the World-renowned New Jerusalem Menagerie, begs to announce that the curiosities of his collection outvie those of all previous shows, from the days of Captain Noah to those of Phineas T. Barnum. As a sample of his vast and unparalleled exhibition, he draws attention to the following items:—

A SCARCE & UNIQUE COLLECTION OF COCKATRICES. The cockatrice is a sort of viper hatched from the egg of a cock. These curious animals have become extinct, having refused to lay since the time of Peter. They were, however, well known to the Bible writers. (See Isaiah xi., 8; xiv., 29; lix., 5; Jer. viii., 17).

DRAGONS OF ALL KINDS, including a Great Red Dragon having seven heads and ten horns (Rev. xii., 3). Some of these dragons will give a selection of the hymns with which they praise the Lord (Ps. cxlviii., 7).

BEHEMOTHS and LEVIATHANS (Job. xl. and xli.)
SATYRS and UNICORNS as described by Isaiah (xliii., 21; xxxiv., 7, 14; Ps. xxii., 21, etc.)

BEASTS FULL OF EYES, within and without.

CHERUBIM and SERAPHIM.

The cherubim have each four faces and four wings (see Ezekiel i., 5). The seraphim appear in the shape of fiery serpents (Num. xxi., 6).

TALKING ANIMALS, including Balaam’s Ass, the Eden Serpent and the famous Holy Dove.

THE THREE FAMOUS FIRE KINGS, SHADRACH, MESHACH & ABEDNEGO, will perform their Marvellous Feats in a furnace of 360° Fahr.

DANIEL, THE LION-TAMER, will enact his daring exploits every day until further notice.

SAMSON, THE STRONGEST MAN ON EARTH, will exhibit his wonderful feat of tying three hundred foxes’ tails together and nightly *bring down the house.*

Do not omit to visit Mrs. Lot, the Saline Woman; Joshua, the Sun-stayer; Elijah and his Chariot and Horses of Fire, and the Marvellous Water-walking and Balloon Ascent of the famous Jehoshua Unctus. The whole to conclude with a

GENERAL CONFLAGRATION

And the Ascent of 144,000 Virgins.



LEADING THEM ON.

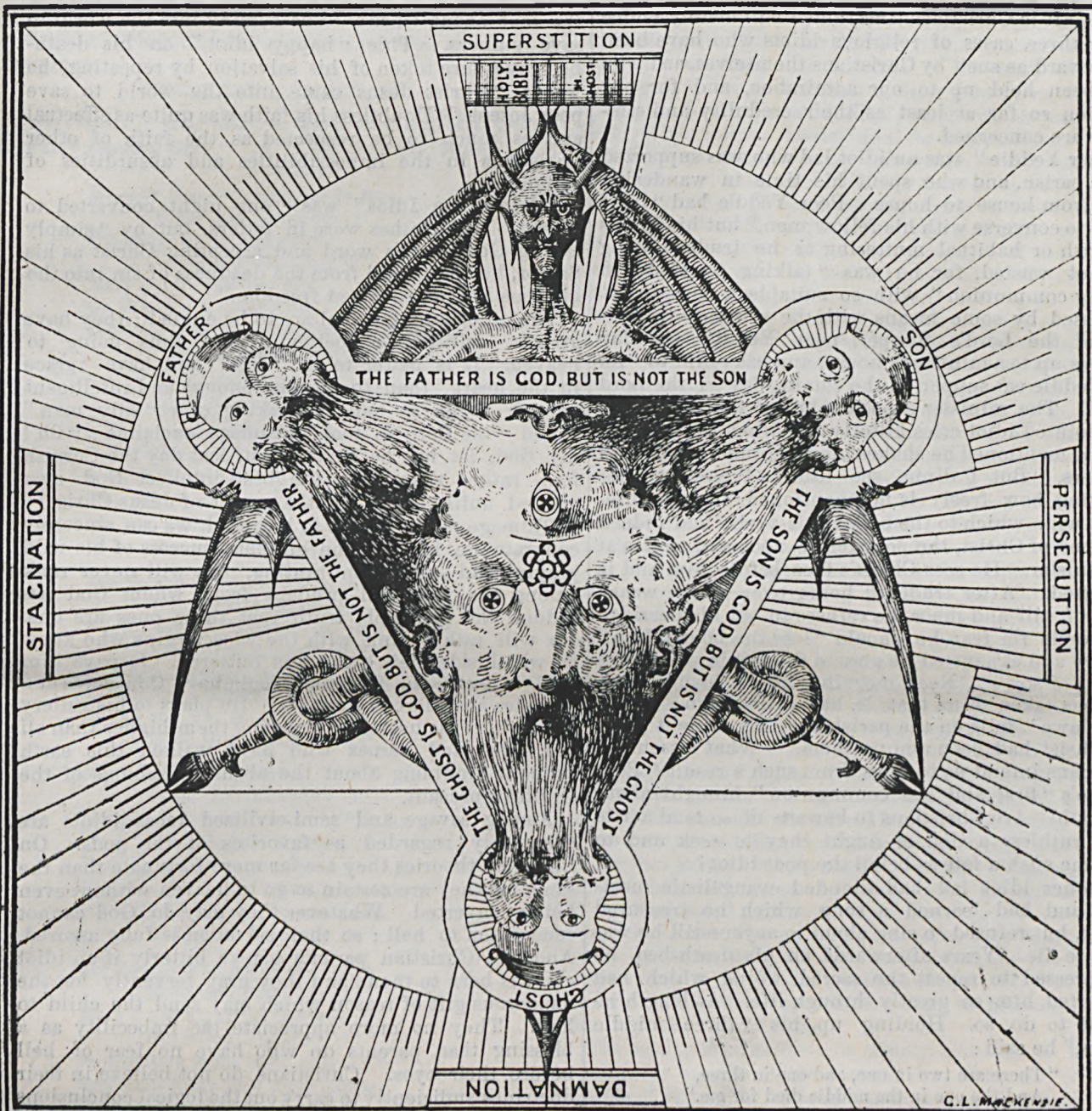
“And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud . . . and by night in a pillar of fire.”
EXODUS XIII., 21.

INSPIRATION.

O hoary sculptor, stay thy hand:
I fain would view the lettered stone.
What carvest thou?—perchance some grand
And solemn fancy of thine own.
For oft to know the fitting word
Some humble worker God permits.
"Jain Ann Meginnis,
Agid 3rd.
He giveth his beluved fits."—*Bierce.*

PRAYER.

The bull tore up the alkali dust
As he looked on the girl in red.
Her bosom swelled till she thought 'twould bust
And down on her knees in the alkali dust
Her humble prayer she said.
He reared and bellowed and made a fuss
As down the lane he fled.
"You bob-tailed, short-horned, brindled-faced cuss,"
Was the end of the prayer she said.



THE CHRISTIAN QUATERNITY, & TRINITY-IN-UNITY.

EARTHLY AXIOMS:

*The whole is greater than a part.
Things equal to the same thing are equal to one another.*

UNEARTHLY AXIOMS:

*A part is equal to the whole.
Things equal to the same thing are different from one another.*

N.B.—Having neither spite against Humanity, nor pecuniary interest in Lunatic Asylums, we earnestly hope that no one will attempt to fathom this **MYSTERY.**

White gentleman—"Uncle Joe, you never work on Sunday, do you?" Uncle Joe—"No, Sah. You doan ketch sich a 'ligous nigger as me wukkin' on Sunday. I so keerful 'bout dat I doan wuk on no day dat tech Sunday. I doan wuk on Sat'day nor Monday, nuther; an' sometimes I keep Sunday de whole week. You got to rustle roun' ef you want ter find a nigger wid mo' 'ligion den I's got."

§ "And I want to say, 'To my husband,' in an appropriate place." said the widow, in conclusion, to Slab, the gravestone man. "Yessu" said Slab, "To my husband, in an appropriate place."

Parson: "I understand, deacon, that the church carpet is being ruined by water from dripping umbrellas." Deacon: "It is so, parson, and something has got to be done." Parson: "Why not have a rack in the vestibule, and leave the umbrellas there instead of carrying them to the seats?" Deacon: "I am afraid it would spoil the solemnity of the benediction." Parson: "You think so?" Deacon: "Yes; everybody would want to be the first out so as to get the best ones."

What did Adam say when he found he had lost his rib and got a woman in exchange? He said it was a dam-soll.

Religious Idiots.

OF course I have no intention of dealing with all the branches of so extensive a subject as "Religious Idiots" in a short article. I will not hurt religious feelings by inquiring how far Hosea may have been justified by facts in declaring that "the prophet is a fool, the spiritual man is mad." Neither will I investigate the innumerable cases in which enemies of religion may regard the actions, words and doctrines of saints as idiotic. It is Christmas time, and I will merely notice two or three cases of religious idiots who have been put forward as such by Christians themselves, and who have been held up to our admiration, and for our imitation so far at least as their credulity and simplicity are concerned.

"Poor Yeddie" was an idiot lad who was supported by his parish, and who spent his time in wandering about from house to house. Poor Yeddie had "little power to converse with his fellow men," but his idiot's gibberish or habitual muttering as he trudged along was not wasted, for he was "talking to God" in "loving communion" with so suitable a companion. Impressed by some means with the religious importance of the Lord's Supper, poor Yeddie one day marches up to a minister's house, and asks him to "let poor Yeddie eat supper on the coming day wi' the Lord Jesus." The minister consents, but at the supper the disappointed idiot cries bitterly and when the name of Jesus is mentioned he shakes his head mournfully and whispers, "But I dinna see him." Presently after partaking, how freely is not mentioned, of the consecrated wine which to the believer is verily and indeed the blood of Christ, the poor fellow nods and smiles at the minister. He sees Christ's face before him and is comforted. After trudging home over many weary miles of hill and moor, he refuses to eat his porridge and treacle for fear he should "lose the bonny face." Hungry and exhausted he goes to the loft in which lies his bed of straw. Next morning he is found dead. God has taken him, that is, has killed him; and a "deep awe" falls on the parish at "this evident proof that Christ had been among them." What lessons do Christians intend us to draw from such a result? Poor Yeddie's "first and last communion" brought about his death. Are Christians to beware of so fatal a rite or so ruthless a God, or ought they to seek and to welcome such a fate as befell the poor idiot?

Another idiot lad had attended evangelistic meetings, and had learned a song which he treasured deeply, but refused to sing aloud to anyone till he was going to die. Years afterwards, on his death-bed, he was pressed to repeat the sacred words which had comforted him so greatly through life. At length he agreed to do so. Holding up his "three middle fingers," he said:

"There are two in one, and one in three,
And the one in the middle died for me."

It is satisfactory to know, on the authority of the Christian narrator, that the repetition of these words shows that "this half-witted lad had learned the meaning of the substitutionary death of Jesus for sinners, which many with all their reasoning powers cannot understand."

This case resembles that of "Silly Billy," who so affected the Bishop of Exeter by giving utterance just before he died to the "great thought":

"Oh! what does Silly Billy see?
Three in One and One in Three,
And one of Them has died for me."

So impressed was the Bishop by this appropriate representation of the sublime doctrines of the Trinity in Unity and the Atonement that he quoted the case with much feeling as his justification for confirming five of the inmates of the Western Counties Idiot Asylum at Exeter. We can quite agree with the Bishop that devout idiots are fully worthy of confirmation, and that he may as well impart the Holy Spirit to them by the laying on of hands as to Christians who are still outside the asylum. We are also free to admit that simpletons like "Silly Billy" are fitting expounders of the fundamental mysteries of the Christian creed.

Another "silly man without a soul" is highly commended by the Rev. Dr. Cunningham for his explanation of this acknowledged absence of a soul. He had given it to Jesus, he said, and Jesus was keeping it safe till he came again. "And that is the right place in which to have one's soul," says the clergyman; "that poor man, though not possessed of all his wits, was right about Christ, and he will rise up in condemnation against the intelligent rejectors of the Gospel," who venture to think for themselves.

An "idiot who was no fool" was always repeating the text about Christ Jesus coming into the world to save sinners. This "happy idiot" on his death-bed gave sure token of his salvation by repeating the words "Christ Jesus came into the world to save poor Joseph." Doubtless his faith was quite as effectual and as much to be respected as the faith of other Christians in the impossibilities and absurdities of religion.

"Jamie the Idiot" was "one night converted to Christ." His clothes were in tatters, but by "simply taking God at His word and accepting Christ as his Savior, he had passed from the deadness of sin into the glorious life of redeemed freedom."

The idiot and the fool are to be envied; they have greater facilities for believing and thus going to heaven. It is better to be "daft" and have "grace in the heart" than to be wise enough and intelligent enough to go to hell. Speaking of a "silly man" called "the Cornish fool," Talmage exclaims: "Oh! my God, let me be in the last, last day the Cornish fool, rather than have the best intellect God ever created unillumined by the gospel of Jesus Christ!" If Talmage really wishes to be a fool, we can sincerely congratulate him on the eminent success of his wild praying and extravagant ranting. He will never rank among the wise and prudent from whom God has hidden the profitable truth that three ones are one. He will rather rank with the wise virgins who knew on which side their bread was buttered. It pays him well to exalt the Christian fool above Confucius and Socrates and Marcus Aurelius. He plays to his gallery and flatters his hearers by placing them higher than all the sages and heroes who have walked this earth without troubling about the absurd teachings of the Galilean peasant.

Among savage and semi-civilized races idiots are commonly regarded as favorites of the gods. On Christian theories they are far more fortunate than the sane, for they are certain to go to heaven without even being converted. Whatever they may do, God cannot send them to hell; so their salvation is fully assured. And yet Christian parents grieve bitterly if an idiot child is born to them, and they pray fervently for the dangerous gift of reason which may send the child to hell. They no more appreciate the imbecility as a blessing than parents do who have no fear of hell before their eyes. Christians do not believe in their doctrines sufficiently to carry out the logical conclusions derivable from them. If the horrible doctrine of everlasting punishment were true, we should rejoice at the increase of idiots who are safe from such a doom. We should endeavor to increase their number by promoting marriages among idiots so as to multiply an idiot race whose eternal happiness is certain.

The proportion of idiots in heaven must be enormous. All the idiots of all races and of all times must be there, while of the sane only a very small proportion succeed in passing through the narrow gate. Not one-fourth of the human race is yet even nominally Christian, and three-fourths of these nominal Christians are swayed by superstitions which the Protestant elect declare "are but one remove from Paganism." Of the residue few are real believers who fulfil all the required conditions and continue faithful to the end. If some Christian statistician would favor the world with a careful estimate of the relative numbers of the insane and of the elect, I think it would appear that the insane who reach heaven independently of religion and the death of Christ must greatly outnumber the (relatively) sane souls who are saved by the blood of the Lamb. I think it would be shown that more souls are rescued from perdition by insanity than are saved by the atoning sacrifice of God

the Son. If so, insanity has been a greater blessing to the human race than Christianity. Of course, both blessings may be attributed to God, and idiots and Christians of all kinds may well join in singing (or howling, as the case may be), "Praise God from whom all blessings flow"—insanity and Christianity, of course, being put first on the list. Even if God removes the redeeming insanity, when those whom he has blessed with it have finally reached the celestial mansions, the first use of the newly-acquired reason must be to thank him for withholding it while it would so grievously have imperilled their everlasting happiness.

W. P. BALL.

Mrs. J.; or, Good God Almighty O!

TUNE: "Duncan Gray;" or, "Ha, ha! the Woin' o't."

H—Y G—T came her to woo,
 Good God Almighty O!
 On Lady-day to Mary flew
 Good God Almighty O!
 Mary gently cast her eye
 On the pigeon cooing by,
 Blushed, and murmured, with a sigh,
 "Good God Almighty O!"

"Don't be bashful," cooed the Dove;
 Good God Almighty O!
 "Ev'ry pretty girl should love
 Good God Almighty O!
 I will bet—what shall I say?—
 Two to one, in eggs, I'll lay,
 Joe will make you Mrs. J.—
 Good God Almighty O!"

Joseph one night dreamt he saw
 Good God Almighty O.
 "Joe," said he, "make Poll your squaw,
 Good God Almighty O!
 Betting's hardly in my way,
 Yet an egg I'll gladly lay,
 Polly's son will be, some day,
 Good God Almighty O!"

Mary had a little lamb,
 Good God Almighty O;
 Joseph smiled, but mutter'd "damn
 Good God Almighty O!
 Holy Cuckoo, ope your beak:
 Where's the usual 'crown per week'?"
 "Joe," said Mary, "do not cheek
 Good God Almighty O!"

Joe had thus to board and lodge
 Good God Almighty O;
 Mary's was an artful dodge—
 Good God Almighty O!
 Superstition lauds their names;
 Craft and Folly play their games;
 Common-sense, amazed, exclaims—
 "Good God Almighty O!!!

G. L. MACKENZIE.

The Babyhood of Christ.

MANY essays, pamphlets, and papers are continually appearing treating of the different stages of Christ's life, from boyhood to manhood; the titles of these rhapsodies being curious literary gems—"The Boyhood of Christ," "The Manliness of Christ," &c., etc. The Talmages and men of that ilk orate about Jesus in the carpenter's shop. What grand lessons to be learned from that part of his career, also from his disputation in the Temple! No doubt, in the near future, we shall have papers written on "The Sprightliness of Christ," "The Jocundity of Jesus," etc. But the babyhood of the third part of Jehovah has never been practically attempted; and, thinking your readers would take an interest in the infant life of Christ, I have, after great research, been able to collate the contents of the present paper. Of course, my occupation of Special Aerial Correspondent to your entertaining paper has given me facilities of verification very advantageous to my purpose.

The mottled stage of a God must of necessity be crowded with episodes intensely interesting—for instance, at the first inflation of its baby lungs, how the parents (for Joe had

no suspicion) must have fallen into each others' arms, and hailed with tears of joy the sound of the first shrill shriek emanating from this very, very young offshoot of the Trinity! Then the mother's fond look as the baby-god hunted almost blindly for nourishment, willing to suck any foreign substance on the off-chance of it yielding lacteal refreshment, bumping its little stubby nose as it bobs its god-like head at projections which it falsely supposes are founts from which to draw its infantile bread and cheese and beer!

And then to see the very little pinky deity adding to his incarnation daily by piling up that puddingy-looking flesh on the small gristly frame, his cheeks gradually extending, his little eyes receding; the knuckles of his small fist not standing up in the normal state of later growth, but merely represented by dimples sunk deeply on the chubby hands of God! What intense interest must be awakened when the child Jesus at intervals vainly endeavours to suck nourishment from one or other of his tiny doubled-up paws—the paws of a deity! What a beautiful lesson to be learned by studying the look of wonder of the young Christ trying, in baby fashion, to account for the appearance of his toes! Still you might trace an artful twinkle of his infant eye, hinting to an observer the knowledge of a far older nature than was contained in the small compass of a few weeks old baby—knowledge that seemed to want to burst the soft downy skin, and come out as a rash all over him; for, although compressed into such a small space, it must have contained the accumulation of æons and æons of time—of familiarity with countless other incarnations on countless other earths. And this suppressed intelligence gave to this third part of a Deity a somewhat shrewd, ticklish appearance, especially when he closed his left eye during his mamma's fond endearments, couched in the baby language she thought he would best understand.

A very touching sight also was to witness the anxiety of Mary at a later stage watching the little Jew maiden, who lives next door, taking Jesus out for an airing in the perambulator of the period, with its little mouth puckered as it sucks at its bottle of lacteal mixture, the creases of its downy skin being effaced as it visibly swells. The home of Joseph must have presented a cheerful domestic sight when the little shirts and white robes were hung up after washing, poor Joe must have got irate as his head knocked against the little woolly boots hanging on a line across the living room—and then the wonder of Joe at the fearful pinning up of the mottled incarnation of the infant God—Joseph nursing it in a weird manner thinking the infant might break, then later on the first attempt of babyhood to articulate "Mamma" in Hebrew, later still, the small toddling deity helping mother by fetching small purchases from the little general shop round the corner, with no appearance on its baby face of its future greatness, only smudgy stains from the last toffee orgie—what grand lessons were here for the Christian moralist to expatiate on, and how true to prophecy is all this inner child life of Jesus.

The cutting the first tooth is plainly indicated by David cutting his enemies up with saws, etc. Then one of the plagues of Egypt, the turning the dust into insects of the pediculus genus, manifestly and clearly foretells the using of the first comb to Christ's infantile head. Jehovah's exhibit to Moses in the cleft of the rock, when he took his hand from his back parts, most certainly is a lucid prophecy of the first birching the truant-loving Jesus would receive from his preceptor. By drawing your readers' attention to these clearly defined prophecies will assist them to unravel other obscure parts of the Bible, and show them what wonderful knowledge those great men must have had who headed the different chapters in Solomon's Song with such descriptive headings, lighting up the hidden meaning of what might have been taken for an erotic love ballad.

I am sure the more we know of the naperly period of Jesus Christ, the more interesting the most petty detail becomes, just the same as had he lived, how grand would it have been to have traced out the inception of his first corn, his first grey hair, and the time when he had to put on his first spectacles to read the small items in the *Jerusalem Gazette*. If only these few details of the baby life of a God causes your readers to think, then the purpose of this descriptive paper is effected.

Two tramps stopped at the house of a lone widow, and one went in to beg. Very soon he came out with a bloody nose and a black eye. "Did you get anything, Jack?" "Yes," growled the sufferer, "I've got the widow's night."

THE CREATION AND FALL.

IN TWELVE ACTS.



1. Let there be light.



2. Fixing the Sun and Moon.



3. Jahveh makes Great Whales.



4. Makes Man in his Image.



5. Adam gets a wife.



6. Don't touch the Pippins.



7. Take an apple, madam!



8. Have a bite, Adam!



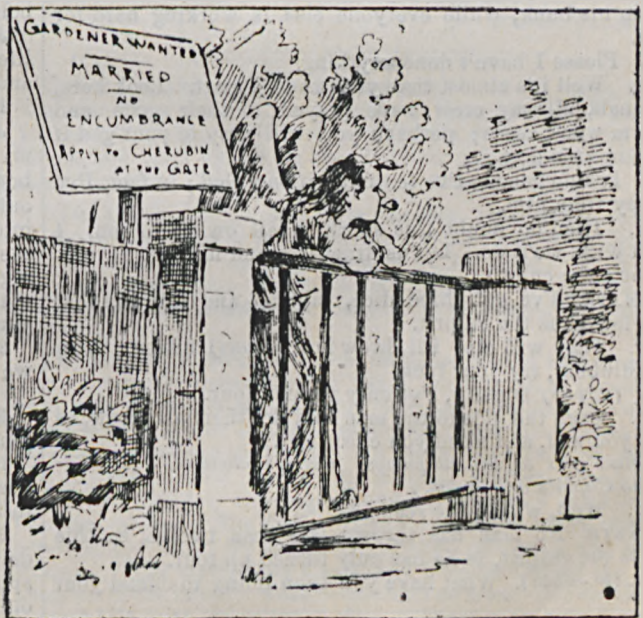
9. Where are they?



10. Jahveh swears.



11. Kicked Out.



12. A vacancy in Eden.

Jonah and the Whale; Or, the Ninnies of Nineveh.

A BURLESQUE IN FOUR ACTS.

ACT I.

SCENE.—Bedroom. *Jonah asleep in bed. Enter Jehovah through back window.*

JEHOVAH. Ha, ha, he sleepeth. I will awake old Jonah. He little knows what's in store for him. I intend to make a missionary of him; he's just cut out for that purpose. I must disturb his peaceful slumbers and unfold to him my little plans. (*Goes to Jonah's bed and digs him in the ribs.*) Now then, wake up old stick-in-the-mud! Don't sleep all your senses away—not that you want much sense to become a missionary.

JONAH (*sitting up*). Thieves! murder! fire!

JEH. Don't excite yourself, old fellow; I want you to do a little job for me.

JON. (*putting on dressing gown*). I don't know who you are; but you needn't half kill a chap the next time you want to wake him up.

JEH. I am Jehovah.

JON. The Devil you are!

JEH. No, I'm not the Devil; I'm the other fellow.

JON. Excuse me; it was only an exclamation of surprise on my part.

JEH. Well, don't do it again, or my wrath will wax hot. Now listen to me. I have an important engagement for you I want you to go to Nineveh and convert the people there, for they are all terribly wicked. They don't care a rap for me, and break my laws with impunity. They eat meat on Fridays, make rabbit-hutches and chicken-houses on Sunday mornings, and never in their lives think of attending a gospel-shop. I can't stand such conduct any longer; I mean to destroy their city.

JON. What am I to do? Blow it up with dynamite?

JEH. No. Go and preach to them, and say that if they don't stop their wickedness I'll snuff them out altogether.

JON. But they might snuff me out altogether.

JEH. O no they won't; I will take care of you.

JON. (*aside*). I don't care very much for this job. (*To Jehovah*) Don't you think you could get someone else?

JEH. No. I've chosen you, and to Nineveh you'll have to go, whether you like it or not. You will make an excellent preacher, for you can sling the hatchet better than any man in this city. So pack up at once. Here's a collection-box, and a bundle of tracts, and sixpence to help you on your journey. So farewell till we meet again. (*Exit.*)

JON. I wish he had picked on someone else. I'm not going to Nineveh. I'll see him blowed first. I know what I will do; I'll emigrate.

CURTAIN.

ACT II.

SCENE.—Deck of ship. *Mighty tempest. Great Confusion. Sailors throw wares overboard to lighten vessel, others at pumps.*

CAPTAIN. I've never encountered such a gale during all my experience. Shiver my timbers, I believe it's all up with us.

1ST MATE. It's blowing hurricanes and the ship's taking in water fast. The men have been praying to their different gods, but now they have taken to the pumps.

CAPT. Neither pumping nor praying seems to do much good. Where's that landlubber we picked up at Joppa?

1ST MATE. Down below, somewhere. The fellow hasn't got his sea-legs yet, I suppose. I'll go and fetch him up.

CAPT. He must be the cause of this storm, I verily believe.

1ST MATE. Here's the lazy varmint. I found him fast asleep in his bunk, while everyone else is working hard for his life.

JON. Please I haven't done anything.

CAPT. Well it's almost time you made a start. Look here, Mr. Jonah, all my crew have prayed to their gods and the storm won't cease; perhaps you will pray to your god if you are not too lazy.

JON. It's no good. I've fell out with my God; in fact, I've run away from him.

CAPT. Then no doubt this storm is all owing to you. I tell you what we'll do. Let us draw lots and find out for certain who's the culprit.

1ST MATE. I've got three dice, captain, and the one that throws lowest is the culprit.

CAPT. They will do. I'll throw first (*throws*) fifteen. Now you landlubber, try your luck.

JON. (*throws*) O golly, I've only thrown four.

CAPT. Take the dice to the men and let them all throw, as well as yourself, and mind you cheat fair.

(*1st Mate goes to men at pumps. Great excitement. 1st Mate returns to Captain and Jonah.*)

CAPT. Well, what's the result?

1ST MATE. No man has thrown less than twelve, so this fellow is the culprit, as he has only turned up four.

CAPT. (*to Jonah*). What have you been doing to offend your God?

JON. He wanted me to go to Nineveh to preach to the people, and save them from their sins. I didn't care for the job, so I skedaddled. I'll never do it again.

CAPT. Well something will have to be done or else we shall all be drowned.

JON. Perhaps you'd better throw me overboard. (*Aside*) I hope they won't do it though.

CAPT. You are a greasy old Jew and you might have some effect on the waves.

1ST MATE. Shall I tell the men to cease pumping and come and bid old Jonah adieu.

CAPT. Ah, do.

(*Sailors gather round; shake Jonah's hand rather too hard. Two sailors take him up and are about to throw him overboard.*)

1ST MATE. By Jove, there's a whale all ready with its mouth open waiting to receive him.

CAPT. That will save him from getting wet. Drop the old Jew gently down its throat, and mind you don't hurt the poor fellow.

(*Sailors drop Jonah into whale's mouth. Storm ceases at once; whale swims off; sailors sing,*

Good-bye Jonah, we must leave you,

A hungry whale was ready to receive you, etc.

CURTAIN.

ACT III.

SCENE.—Sea coast, *Jonah lying on the shore, whale swimming off in the distance.*

JONAH (*rising*). Well I've had cheap lodgings, but have gone rather short of grub. I've been three days and three nights in that whale's belly, and all I could get was a few raw sprats and a couple of shrimps. And wasn't it stifling inside of that whale. I wouldn't have cared so much if there were any windows and I could have seen some of the glories of the ocean. Never again will I flee from the presence of the Lord. Besides, that whale might have put me down more gently; he's nearly broken all my ribs. But I must hurry up now and get at once to Nineveh, or else I shall meet with another calamity (*looks on the ground*) Halloa, what's this? A red jersey, I do declare, "SALVATION" on the front. I want to make myself look smart, so I will wear it. (*Puts it on.*) By jove! here's a big drum and sticks; they must have dropped straight down from heaven. The Lord be praised; with this Salvation jersey and a big drum I could convert the whole world. (*Slow music.*)

CURTAIN.

ACT IV.

SCENE.—City of Nineveh. *People feasting, dancing and singing and merry-making.*

1ST INHABITANT. Look yonder; a stranger comes this way. What a funny old sight to be sure. He's banging a big drum and making noise enough to wake the dead.

2ND INHAB. Perhaps he's escaped from a lunatic asylum.

1ST INHAB. No, he's been ship-wrecked. Look on his breast, there is the name of his vessel "SALVATION." We will ask him where he hails from.

(*Enter Jonah with Salvation jacket, and playing a big drum, with a collection-box hanging by his side.*)

1ST INHAB. Halloa, old chap, where did you spring from?

JON. Repent, repent, repent.

1ST INHAB. Never heard of the place. Whereabouts is it?

JON. Hallelujah, hallelujah (*beats drum*).

1ST INHAB. Don't know it. Shut up that horrid row, and let us know why you have paid us this visit.

JON. The Lord has sent me to save you from your sins. If you don't repent, in forty days your city will be destroyed (*Shakes box*) Please, don't forget the collection-box.

1ST INHAB. The people of Nineveh have committed no sin. In fact, we do not even require a prison in this city. We believe in enjoying ourselves and making the most of this life.

JON. O, ye wicked sinners, you should think more of the life to come. Repent, repent, repent while there is yet time, and please don't forget the collection-box.

1ST INHAB. What sins have we committed?

JON. The Lord only knows. He gave me sixpence to pay my travelling expenses here, and I absconded and got on board a ship. He sent a violent storm, and the sailors found out it was all through me; so they threw me overboard right into the jaws of a whale, which came in the nick of time, praise the Lord, and I was in the whale's belly three days and three nights, and then it deposited me on dry land.

1ST INHAB. You can spin a tidy yarn old chap. I guess your Salvation crew can tell a few fibs.

2ND INHAB. Here comes the king. He will tell us whether we are to believe this fellow or not.

(*Enter King of Nineveh and retinue of servants.*)

KING OF NINEVEH. Who is this stranger ye have among you?

1ST INHAB. A messenger from Jehovah. He says he has been sent to save us from our sins, and that if we don't repent, in forty days our city will be destroyed.

K. OF N. Then we will have to repent and believe in this deity even if we don't want to, for I've heard that Jehovah is a spiteful old God and is terribly revengeful. Bring out all the old sacks in the city. Get ye hence to the coal wharves and rag merchants and find all you possibly can. Every man jack of you will have to decorate himself with sackcloth and dance in ashes. Not only men, women and children, but all horses,

bullocks, sheep, pigs, dogs, and cats and everything else. Now Brother Jonah, don't you think that when my orders are carried out this city will be saved?

JON. O yes, certainly, but don't forget the contribution-box.

K. OF N. Give it to me, I'll wrap that in sackcloth as well.

JON. Oh no you won't.

Enter hundreds of inhabitants and animals all dressed in sackcloth.

Ashes are strewn about. All dance to "Dead March in Saul."

K. OF N. (Who has gone round with collection-box.) Go ye and tell Jehovah that we repent, and ask him to save our city from destruction. Here is your collection-box full of coppers,

JON. That's the style. You are repenting fast. All of you will have to undergo two week's self-denial, and send the money you thus save to Messrs. Jehovah & Co.—care of Mr Jonah—and Nineveh will not be destroyed.

CURTAIN.

SCOFFER.

The Wise Men.

I.

THREE sages were sitting one night at tea,
(Gaspar, Belshazzar, and Melchiór),
As merry as sandboys or grigs could be,
For the table displayed an inviting store.
They had winkles and shrimps and eggs and toast;
Muffins and crumpets their powers engrossed—
And each one endeavored to eat the most.
These were their names (as we've heard before),
Gaspar, Belshazzar and Melchiór.

'We'll have the tea-pot refilled, I think,"
Said Belshazzar to Gaspar and Melchiór;
'And, in order to see what we eat and drink,
Please turn up the lamp-light a le-e-tle bit more."
Then he stirred up the fire with all his might,
And was taking a very respectable bite
From a hot-cross bun, when a dazzling light
Illumined the optics (and made them sore),
Of Gaspar, Belshazzar, and Melchiór.

Such a howl arose from each of the three!
(Belshazzar and Gaspar and Melchiór);
For the tea-pot fell, and the boiling tea
Fell over their legs and down to the floor.
But what was a scald to the horrible dread
That lifted each hair on each reverend head,
When a double-bass voice from the Firmament said—
"What! Have ye forgotten your mystical lore,
Oh Gaspar, Belshazzar, and Melchiór?"

"The new-born King your visit awaits,
Belshazzar and Gaspar and Melchiór;
And I'll have the scalps from your hoary pates
Unless you think proper to go and adore.
So saddle your mokes and be off in a trice;
Away to Judea and take 'something nice'—
Some jewels (for Mary) and 'bacca and spice."
Then silence descended, and somebody swore—
Either Gaspar, Belshazzar or Melchiór.

They took their gamps and their carpet bags—
(Poor Gaspar, Belshazzar and Melchiór!)
And impounded a youngster, all tatters and rags,
To belabour and batter their steeds galore.
An angel flew first with a paraffin lamp
(He didn't fly fast for he suffered from cramp);
And if ever they stopped, with a view to encamp,
A voice said: "Away! or I'll have your gore,
Belshazzar and Gaspar and Melchiór!"

So sometimes awake, and sometimes asleep
Rode Gaspar, Belshazzar and Melchiór;
They fell into gorges and cataracts deep;
(The angel, delighted, exclaiming "O Lor!")
And wherever the light of a hostelry shone,
They entered its portals for "only just one,"
Till a bellicose bellow repeated "Begone!"
Then slowly and sadly they settled the score—
Belshazzar and Gaspar and Melchiór.

But, alas and alack! the angel-guide
Of Gaspar, Belshazzar and Melchiór,
Discovered a weakness for sausages (fried);
So he put out the lamp, and came down to explore.
He entered the dwelling of Isaac, a Jew,
Who was cooking for supper (*sub rosa*) a few;
But the Hebrew adroitly the trespasser slew;
And Jahveh ne'er heard of him afterwards, nor
Did Gaspar, Belshazzar and Melchiór.

II.

One day King Herod had chanced to stray
To a dim secluded sort of place;
Which, strange to say, was the private way
To the house where he daily "inflamed his face."

But a Babel of voices arose within
As he lifted his hand to raise the latch,
And he thought he detected an odor of gin;
So he looked through the keyhole, and tried to catch
A glimpse of the speakers, "because," said he,
"If they're subjects of mine it's an awful bore."
But his fears were vain; they were strangers three—
Gaspar, Belshazzar, and Melchiór.

So he entered the bar..... And late that night
Emerg'd three shadowy forms from the Tap;
(The king couldn't walk, being shockingly "tight";
And he found in the morning he "hadn't a rap.")
The bounds of the city they passed in a trice,
And off through the darkness they wildly tore;
For they knew, if they lingered, the guards would slice
Up Gaspar, Belshazzar, and Melchiór.

III.

Three strangers came riding to Bethlem town,
To Bethlem town at dawn of day:
And long they rode up and long they rode down
In search of a place to "moisten their clay."
Now the Lord in his wisdom had chosen *the inn*—
To make matters sure—in days of yore:
It was safe to be found (if they had the tin)
By Gaspar, Belshazzar, and Melchiór.
At last they discovered and opened the door.
They found the place crowded with friends and relations
While Mary and Joe dealt out liquors and rations;
Old Zack had just warbled a song (by desire)
And Eliza was stoker and tended the fire.
On a very high chair sat the Heaven-born king,
His legs were crossed with an easy grace,
He sucked a churchwarden instead of a ring,
And his breath was suggestive of cloves and mace.

His "horsey" togs and his stove-pipe hat,
As he hammered the table and yelled "encore!"
So flummuxed the Magi that glued to the mat
Stood Gaspar, Belshazzar and Melchiór.
Said the Boy, with a grin, "Why don't you come in?"
The draught you are causing the Devil would freeze."
Then, falling before him they tried to adore him,
But he said with a curs-word, "Get up off them knees!"
At the words, they arose; and, blowing his nose,
Said Gaspar "These jewels we've brought for your ma:
This bacca's for Joe; and these spices, you know,
Are for you." But the Lamb said impatiently: "Bah!
It's extremely unkind to come and remind
An unfortunate chap that he's got to be crucified!
What? Told by my dad? Now that's really too bad!
Why! Yes! I can see him up yonder, by gad!

The insulting old wretch might have gone to the deuce if I'd
Known he could rudely sit putting the singers out
By grinning at me with his thumbs and his fingers out.
But, come! let's be gay; I'm resigned to my fate;
"Sit down and be jolly." But, sad to relate,
Just as each was supplied with a glass and a plate,
In rushed the fat host, as white as a ghost,
With "'Ere's all the king's soldier's and all the king's 'osses
In search of three codgers with crimson probosces!"
Before he'd done speaking the trio had fled—
As the soldiers arrived with the king at their head;
And, while search was proceeding, 'neath couches and tables,
They were off on three horses they'd filched from the stables.
'Twas a different road they pursued, it is true;
But, in their situation, good friends, wouldn't you?

EX-RITUALIST.

Curate: "Have you been confirmed, boy? Boy: "Yes, sir, I was done three times." Curate: "Done three times! What do you mean?" Boy: "Yes, sir, once by Mr. Brown, once by Mr. Green, and once by Mr. White. Mother said if I wasn't done three times, the Confirmation would not take."

"Don't you think," said Mrs. Keener, "that when Adam realised the vastness of the world into which he had been ushered that he must have had a great deal on his mind?" "Well," responded Mrs. Blunt, "from the photographs I have seen of him I should say that whatever he did have on must have been on his mind."

The old style of Methodist class meetings has not exactly gone into "innocuous desuetude" in Texas, but it is not as prevalent as it was in "olden times" One morning a strolling Irishman found himself seated in a little shed-roof house listening to the experience of a lot of the faithful Of course Mike was astonished, and listened in silent wonder, till a young brother got up who was rather bashful, and began:—"I have married me a wife, brethren, and—" "The devil ye have!" said Mike, which caused a momentary titter; but the young brother recovered and continued: "I've married me a wife, and I am glad to say she is a daughter of the Lord." Mike could stand no more. He shouted: "Aarah! sit down, ye galoot! Sure, ye'll never see your father-in-law." Amid a roar Mike was put out. He took it for a political meeting.

The joke in the following will be seen when it is known that the thirsty New Yorker must ferry the Hudson to Hoboken if he desires to drink a glass of beer on Sunday. "Wife (returning from church): 'How beautifully the choir sang 'One More River to Cross!'" Husband: 'Yes, and that reminds me that I have an engagement in Hoboken this afternoon.'"

Tommy—"My father is a church member." Johnny—"So's mine." Tommy—"But my father says your papa ain't, 'cos he don't never come to church, nor put nothin' in the collection-box." Johnny (bravely)—"Well, my papa is an honory member, and honory members don't chip in."



A bishop, a curate, and a layman were fishing in Canadian waters one very hot day last summer. When it came time for luncheon, the bishop produced from under the seat of the boat a bottle—presumably containing apollinaris—and a lump of ice, which he proceeded to break into small pieces. A broad smile played over his heated face as he began to extract the cork from the bottle. The smile changed to an expression of agony as the hot bottle, shooting out its cork with a tremendous explosion, split from neck to bottom, and lost its every drop. With a look of heart-rending appeal the bishop turned to the layman and exclaimed "You're a layman, say it for me!"

HOLY ARSON.

"And God sent an angel unto Jerusalem to destroy it."—1 CHRONICLES XXI., 15.



OBEYING THE BIBLE.

"Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live."—EXODUS XXII., 18.

FLIRTATION.
 "Flirtation is damnation."—*Talmage.*

Well, if flirtation
 Is damnation,
 Our fears away we'll
 fling;
 For, if he's right,
 Damnation's quite
 A pleasing kind of
 thing.

And, by the way,
 We here may say
 That past experience
 teaches,
 There'll be once
 more,
 Just as of yore,
 Damnation at the
 beaches.

And sad to tell,
 He knows full well
 Who his experience
 searches,
 There's often been,
 Plain to be seen,
 Damnation in the
 churches.

A child who had
 just mastered her
 catechism confessed
 herself disappointed,
 because, she said,
 "Though I obey the
 fifth commandment,
 and honor my papa
 and mamma, yet my
 many days are not a
 bit longer in the land,
 because I am still
 put to bed at 7
 o'clock."



A YOUTHFUL THEOLOGIAN.

A small boy not far from Boston was the other day guilty of some outrageous mischief, which he performed alone in a closed room, but which was quickly brought to his door. When his mother remonstrated with the youth he met her reproof by the bold assertion:

"You didn't see me do it."

"No," she replied solemnly, "but God did."

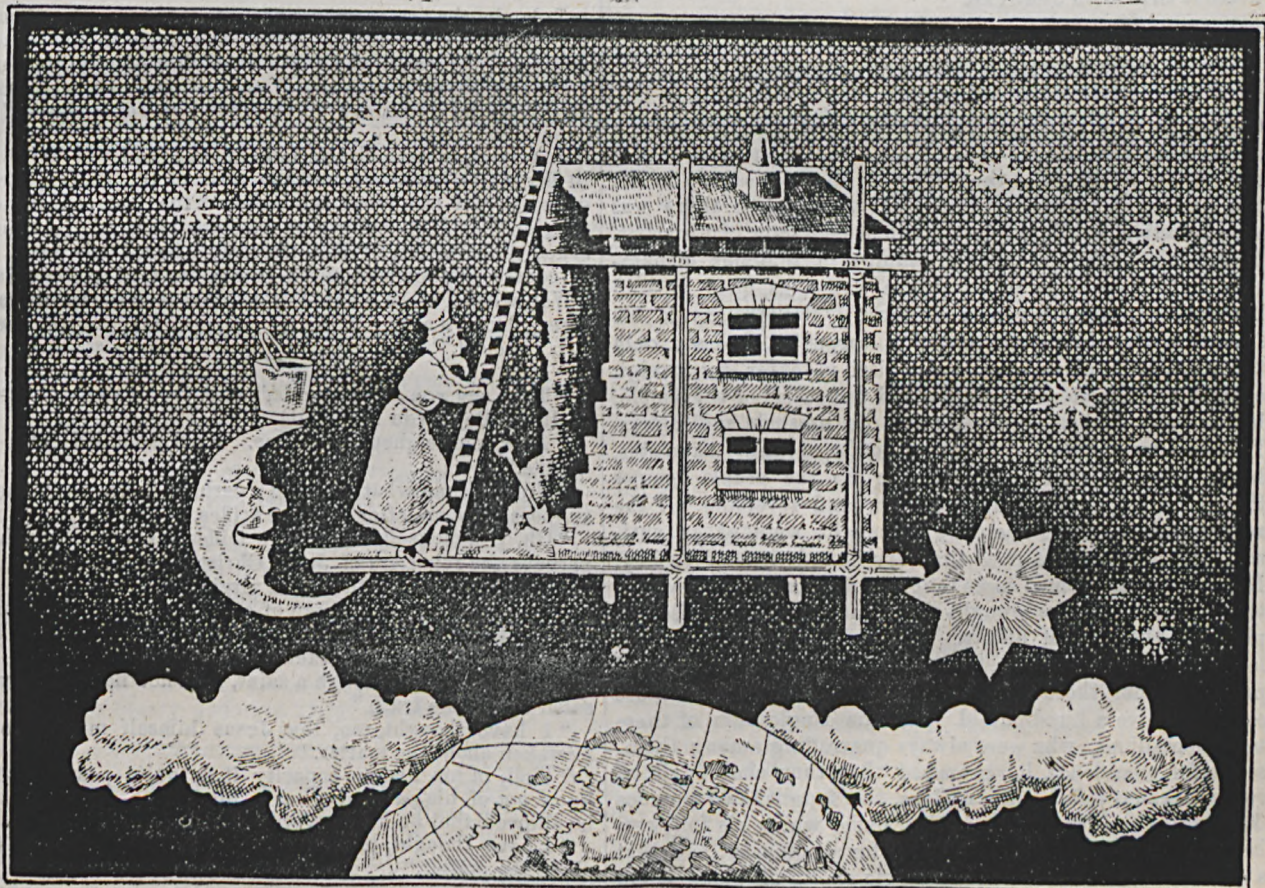
"Well," the urchin retorted, with an air of contemptuous superiority, "guess God ain't going round giving away all he sees in this house."

"My son, hold up your head, and tell me who was the strongest man?" "Jonah." "Why so?" "'Cause the whale couldn't hold him after he got him down."

Where was the first music-hall?—In the Garden of Eden where Eve appeared for Adam's benefit.

SAMPSON AND SANDOW ECLIPSED.

"Behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing."—ISAIAH XL., 15.



CASTLES IN THE AIR.

"It is he that buildeth his stories in the heavens."—AMOS IX., 6.

THE LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT

OF THE LATE
DEFUNCT JEHOVAH.*A flying scroll descended from heaven in a recent snowstorm. It fell on Clerkenwell Green, and proved to be a document in Hebrew, of which the following is a translation.*

I, JEHOVAH SABAOTH, otherwise known as Jahveh, Elohim, the Ancient of days, etc., etc., being old and stricken in years, and having long since found my affairs too burdensome, do in view of my approaching dissolution hereby make my last Will and Testament, hereby annulling my two former Testaments. For a considerable time my powers have been diminishing. The days when I ruled over every department of life are gone never to return, and having been gradually pushed back from all active interference in affairs I see nothing before me but a speedy exit into oblivion.

I leave to my Son, or to be more particular, to the carpenter's wife's son, Jesus, I bequeath such scraps of devotion and shreds and patches of authority as may still be left to me. He has for some time been the only active agent in the business in which I have become but a sleeping partner, and from which, doubtless, he too will be shortly called upon to retire. Meantime I leave him all my interest in mundane affairs. I make over to him all the false flatteries, hypocritical prayers and praises and futile cajoleries hitherto bestowed on me. I leave also to him my Comforter.

To the Paraclete or Holy Ghost I give and bequeath the sum of one shilling in the hope that he will spend it in tar to spread on his feathers. I attribute much of my present uncomfortable position to the attempts to solve whether he proceeded from me or the Son, and whether it was I or he who was responsible for the Son's production.

To my faithful Jews I leave my blessing and my avarice. In consideration of their eighth day offering I have endowed them with an extra proportion of sensuality. May they continue to flourish until they have populated all the world, or at least absorbed all its wealth.

To the Christians I leave my haughty intolerance and my divine imbecility. Since they credited me with altering my law may they go on changing their own continually, and split up into so many mutually hating sects that they will annihilate each other.

To the Freethinkers I leave my worst trouble, my responsibilities. As they have deprived me of my throne, it is but right they should assume my place. Let them buckle to their task and see if the world cannot be carried on better without than with JEHOVAH.

Another Blasphemer.

ONE of the most notorious blasphemers who ever aroused the divine vengeance was J— O—, the reputed son of a respectable workman at the village of N—. Early in life this person, about the legitimacy of whose birth there was some question, exhibited the turbulent character of his spirit. He left his parents in order to indulge in religious disputation, and, when exhorted to return home, as good as told his mother to mind her own business. Brought up to his father's trade, which was that of a carpenter, he not only threw aside the plane, saw, and chisel in order to inveigh against the ministers of religion and the rulers of the people, but actually denied his parents and his brothers and sisters. Followed by a crowd of idle vagabonds of fishy character, he went from place to place stirring up the people against the rich and the established religion, and reversing all the received ideas. The doctrines he taught were of an anti-social character, and sapped the very foundations of society. His chief idea seemed to be a general overturn, in which the well-off would be brought low, and he and his followers placed at the head of affairs. He exhorted the people to leave their families and their homes to follow him, and promised that those who gave up anything for his cause should receive a hundredfold. To the ringleaders of these tatterdemallions, who were always quarrelling among themselves for precedence, he promised that they should sit on twelve thrones judging the nations. He taught the dangerous doctrine of the forgiveness of sins, under which his followers believed that there was exculpation for all offences, and that a pious death and belief in the magic charm of blood could atone for all sin.

The fanatical followers of this blasphemer grew so audacious that at length they hailed him as king of the nation. He went to the Temple and drove out the attendants

by violence. Being betrayed by one of his own followers, he was arrested, and, in accordance with the laws of those times, put to an ignominious death, furnishing to the world for all time an example of the mischievous results of blasphemy.

CELSUS.

The Holy Young Working-man.

Tune: "The Jolly Young Waterman."

And did you not hear of a holy young working-man
Who to Jerusalem went up to die,
And be buried some hours, while his soul, with celerity,
Went to that part where delinquent souls fry?
He looked so sweet, and rode so steadily,
The people all flocked round his donkey so readily;
And they shied down their togs, while such cheers rent
the air,

That this working-man's entry was just like a fair.

Now, would you believe it, this holy young working-man,
Fresh from a supper, went out on the sly,
With his friends, whom he ordered, with silly temerity,
Clothing to part with, and weapons to buy.
He met defeat, near by Gethsemane;
But not till he'd docked a right ear from the enemy;
He was tried by the Romans, who tried to be fair,
Though this working-man treason to Rome did declare.

Of course, they convicted this holy young working-man—
Treason to Rome could but get one reply—
So he died; but, in spite of his holy austerity,
Weak was his heart and despairing his cry.
His winding-sheet, of first-class quality,
He doffed, and, as "clocked," in half-time beat mortality;
For he hid from the grave with nigh two days to spare;
Then this working-man vanished right up in the air!

G. L. MACKENZIE.

PROFANE ANECDOTES.

A Theist once, in seeking to convert an Atheist, cited to him the well-known verse of Voltaire:

"Si Dieu n'existait pas, il faudrait l'inventer."

(If God did not exist it would be necessary to invent him.)

"Just so!" exclaimed the Atheist. "That's exactly what has happened."

Lalande, the astronomer, and author of the Supplement to Maréchal's *Dictionnaire des Athées*, was open in his attacks on religion. He was in the habit of saying of anything untrue, "It's as false as the Gospel," and to any one who reasoned illogically he would say "You argue like Jesus Christ."

A very aged agricultural laborer was believed to be dying in Berkshire Infirmary, and the vicar of St. Mary's, Reading, called to give him what are called "the last consolations of religion." "You believe in the doctrines of the Church?" asked the minister. "Wal, they say I be a Christian." "Yes, of course you believe there is but one God and one Savior." "Wal, when I were a boy I did hear as how as there were three; but it's a long while ago, master, and maybe the other two are dead."

"They say you are a sceptic," said the Bishop of Grenoble to Henri Beyle (de Stendhal).

"Alas, monseigneur, it is true. I am troubled with a few doubts."

"Pray tell me what they are; perhaps I can clear them. I suppose they are after all mere trifles."

"Oh, yes, monseigneur; mere trifles. I have thought that perhaps the reporters of Jesus Christ might be mistaken about that matter of the birth from a virgin."

"Umph. Your doubts are of a rather serious character."

"But that is not all, alas, monseigneur. I have thought that perhaps Joseph was mistaken about that matter."

"Well, Joseph, although a saint, may not have been vouchsafed the whole truth."

"I have thought, too, that Jesus himself may have been mistaken about the matter."

"Well, in his human capacity it is quite possible that he knew not of his paternity, but in his divine capacity it must be allowed that he knew everything."

"I have thought, too, that Mary might have been mistaken about the matter."

"My son, you are dangerously approaching the confines of blasphemy."

"But, father, that is not all. I have thought the other party might have been mistaken about that matter." Here the bishop fled.

A Golden Opportunity.

THE following articles will be sold at the St. Paul's Auction Room on Christmas Eve, 1889. The sale will commence at 6 o'clock. Seats will be reserved near the rostrum for representatives of the Christian Evidence Society and other likely bidders. Applications for tickets must be made on or before December 20 to the auctioneer, Mr. Jeremy Doem.

- (1) The first napkin worn by the infant Jesus, with his initials in Hebrew in every corner.
- (2) The ivory ring, presented by one of the Wise Men of the East, on which the Savior cut his first teeth. This article bears the inscription "Old Melchior to young Jesus." The inscription is absolutely indelible. Bidders will be permitted to test it with a file.
- (3) The first Pair of Shoes worn by Jesus. "From Uncle Zacharias" is worked on the buckles. The genuineness of this lot has been certified by every orthodox university in Europe. The purchaser will receive a guarantee, on parchment, by the Pope and the Archbishop of Canterbury.
- (4) The Savior's first Box of Toys—"From Aunt Elizabeth." Some of the toys represent French soldiers, and have therefore been carpingly objected to as obvious anachronisms; but Aunt Elizabeth was "filled with the Holy Ghost" (see Luke i., 41), and able to foresee the future. The genuineness of this lot is thus incontestable.
- (5) Our Lord's first Rocking-horse. A great curiosity. Neighs every Christmas morning at the hour of the Savior's birth.
- (6) A Kite—"From cousin Johnnie." The genuineness of this article has never been disputed.
- (7) A Parchment, 6 in. by 4. Discovered by Bischendorf in a cave at Nazareth. Writing indecipherable by other scholars, but certified by Bischendorf as the account of a fight, in seven rounds, between the two boys of Elizabeth and Mary. Apparently written by one of the combatants.
- (8) A Chisel. Declared by all the early Fathers to be the first one used by Jesus. Badly notched. Evidently wielded by a beginner.
- (9) A Shaving. The first thrown off from the Savior's jack-plane. Carefully preserved by Mary, afterwards by St. James, and subsequently by a long succession of Bishops. Written guarantee given.
- (10) List of the questions our Lord put to the doctors in the temple. In Hebrew shorthand. Copyright. A great bargain.
- (11) Photograph of the Virgin's nine children. A family group. Mary close behind, and Joseph in the background.
- (12) A Wine Bottle. Said to be the one emptied by Jesus at Cana in Galilee. Purchaser takes all risk and responsibility.
- (13) Stone offered to Jesus by Satan in the Wilderness. Undoubtedly genuine. Tastes crusty when applied to the tongue.
- (14) A Basket. One of the twelve filled with fragments after the miracle of the loaves and fishes. Crumbs and scales still adhering to the interior. A very ancient smell.
- (15) Collection Bag used by Judas. Certified by General Booth. Very capacious.
- (16) The Stater—A Hebrew half-crown—found by Peter in the fish's mouth. Date and design obliterated. Otherwise in a good state of preservation.
- (17) Lump of Clay. Remnant of that with which the Savior medicated the blind. A large sum has been privately offered by the Royal Ophthalmic Hospital. The owner believes it will fetch a higher price in the auction room.
- (18) Towel with which the Savior wiped his apostles' feet. Never washed since. A splendid relic.
- (19) A dried Fig. From the barren fig tree, the year before the blight.
- (20) Basin in which Pilate washed his hands. Pilate's crest on the bottom.
- (21) A Death's Head. Relic of one of the "saints" who rose from their graves at the Crucifixion. He had been beheaded, and his skull was inadvertently left behind in Jerusalem when the owner returned to his grave. The skull bears the signatures of the eleven apostles.
- (22) Pair of shoes, cloak and umbrella. Dropped by Jesus during the ascension. Shoes large twelves; cloak woollen; umbrella dilapidated. This lot cannot be divided.

N.B.—Every lot except No. 12, attested by solemn affidavits before a public notary, endorsed by Mr. Jeremy Doem.

Whelpton's Almanac for 1890 contains one of the best blasphemous stories we have read for a little. Here it is:—Historical? A Hindoo, in an essay on Oliver Cromwell, gave this original information: "Oliver Cromwell was a very stern man. He destroyed Charles I. by repeated beheadals. After this he was never known to smile, but was frequently heard pensively to murmur, 'If I had only served my God as I have served my king, he would never have deserted me in my old age.'"

Answers to Correspondents.

- VOLTAIRE.—Your brilliant witty letter has put new life in our veins. We look forward to enjoying a long chat with you—round the fire.
- JONAH.—Received with thanks. We hold it over for our Summer Number, when your account of the trip in the *Whale* will be more in season.
- PROPHET SAMUEL.—Much obliged. Can you give us the tip for the next Derby?
- SAMSON.—Sandow seems to be a match for you. Why don't you settle his hash with the old gate trick?
- CLERICUS (Stepney).—Your long letter has gone into the wastebasket. After reading six lines at the beginning, and six at the end, we saw you had Mrs. Besant on the brain. Consult Dr. Forbes Winslow.
- HUGH PRICE HUGHES.—We really cannot insert your story of the converted dustman. It is a very ancient chestnut. Try something fresh.
- J. McDOUGALL.—Your article on David's dancing before the ark, though written in a spirit of virtuous indignation, is too spicy for our columns. Try the *Methodist Times*.
- MADAME B.—Y.—The subject is no longer of any interest to our readers.
- J. C.—No doubt your biographers were very loose and inaccurate, but what is the use of setting them right at this time of day? Besides, your "true account" is so extravagant that your own followers would call us humbugs for printing it. We decline to be martyred in such a cause, especially as you fail to answer a single question in the letters we addressed to you a couple of years ago.
- AARON.—Holy Moses! It won't do. We are not to be taken in like that. We wouldn't give you a single copper for the recipe. Offer it to the Pope or the Archbishop of Canterbury. They are in the anointing business; we are not.
- C. H. SPURGEON.—Don't try to frighten us with your Tabernacle thunder. We don't want a dip in your tank. There are very good baths in our own neighborhood. You needn't send us any more of your sermons, either. If you must send something, let it be a dozen of those sixpenny Havanas.
- PROPHET BAXTER.—'ut, tut! The world will last our time. *Après nous le smash-up*.
- WILLIAM BOOTH.—You are misinformed. We never said you were incapable of self-denial. You had a whole week of it, and you must have worked hard at the job to be able to buy a new house at the finish.
- ELISHA.—It is mean to threaten us with an action for libel. You should prosecute the author of the Book of Kings. Still, out of a love of fair play, we note your explanation that you were not bald, but only wore your head shaved to keep it clean. Such a delicate precaution, in that age and among such a people, was little short of miraculous. Pray excuse our incredulity.
- ELIJAH.—Glad to hear from you, old fire-chariot ascensionist! Still more glad to see your temper has improved. By the way, why don't you give a few performances at Olympia? They would look splendid on these dark nights, and Barnum is always ready to pay handsomely for a good thing.
- EZEKIEL.—Thank you. No. We cannot accept your invitation to dinner. We do not relish the instructions of the divine cook. If your prophetic paroxysms trouble you again, consult a physician.
- SOLOMON.—Certainly your production would come within Lord Campbell's act. Even Utah is no longer a safe spot for your seraglio.
- WISE MEN.—Buy the youngster some of our "Acid Drops" and "Sugar Plums."
- JOS. PH.—We commiserate you. Your misfortunes come from your faith in dreams.
- PETER JACKSON.—The pugilist's motto is Hit is eye, Peter. Be not afraid.

EFFICACY OF PRAYER.

A correspondent tells the following story, for the truth of which he vouches:—During the heavy herring fishing on the north-east coast of Scotland in the early part of August, the crew of one of the boats in a small village near W— had been very unsuccessful in getting herrings. Day after day they saw their comrades landing heavy takes, while they had none. Something had to be done, so they determined to hold a prayer meeting and petition Providence for fish. The meeting was duly held, and that night, buoyant with hope, they set sail for the fishing ground. The nets were shot, and all hands anxiously awaited the daylight. At the first peep of dawn the nets were examined, when the catch was discovered to be a fourteen-foot shark, who had rolled himself into them in such a way as to destroy a large part of the drift. After long labor the monster was disentangled from the nets, and as he lay on the deck of the boat, with the damaged nets in piles around him, the skipper taking a somewhat mournful look at the scene, remarked to his crew: "Weel, weel, men, we canna' help this job noo; but the next time we pray for fish we'll no forget to tell the kind we want."



TWINS.

"And Jacob said . . . Behold Esau my brother is a hairy man, and I am a smooth man."—GENESIS XXVII., 11.

HEATHEN CHINEE POKER CLUB.

THE MEMBERS RECEIVE A VISITOR FROM RACE STREET.

THE club had not entered very deeply into the game before a shadow fell upon the table. It was the shadow of a venerable man of color, who stood outside the laundry window looking in upon the battle of chance with wondering eyes.

"My souls!" said the venerable colored person. "If dem Chinese isn't playing pokah!"

"Dem heathen Chinese is a playin' pokah," repeated the venerable colored person, ramming his handkerchief back into his pocket. "Fo' de Lohd! dis am my missyun."

And opening the door he walked in on a new deal, for which Mr. Lee-Tip was shuffling.

"De Reberend Mistah Thankful Smiff," he said, bowing, while the club stared at him stupefied. "A pooh, humble serbent ob de Lohd and President of the Race Street Pokah Club."

And the Rev. Mr. Smith sat down, pulled out his wallet and laid it on the table. Mr. Lee-Tip's eyes gleamed and Mr. Hong-Lung felt for his small change. The Rev. Mr. Smith blew his nose impressively and said:

"Gimme some kyards, my poor benighted brother from the distant clime. Gimme some kyards and prepaih foh to receive de 'sperience ob an expert."

Mr. Lee-Tip dealt him a hand, and the Rev. Mr. Smith lit a cigar and bet a nickle. By the time the hand was all in he had lost a quarter. The next hand found him fifteen cents out, and the next let him down easy at eight.

"Pears to me," muttered the Rev. Mr. Smith, suspiciously, "dat dere's sumfin' wrong heah; my souls! dere mus' be. Desc yer Chinese has too much luck to be nateral."

At this juncture his eye lighted on the effigy of Joss on the shelf over the clothes-wringer, where the usual incense was burning.

"De Lohd forgib me!" he ejaculated; "I knowed somefin' was wrong. And me a playin' pokah wid heathens dat offers up burnt offerings to graben images."

And as an active protest against the wiles of this evil one he reached up with his umbrella and poked the deity of the house off its shelf. Joss, being made of no more substantial substance than baked clay, gilt and painted, split to pieces, which the Rev. Mr. Smith proceeded to grind up under his ample and ponderous feet.

Mr. Lee-Toy was the first to recover from the stupor into which this act of sacrilege plunged the club.

"Why fol you do that, niggel?" he demanded.

"Go softly," retorted the Rev. Mr. Smith, waving his umbrella like a musical conductor's baton. "Choose yo langwidje, idollytur. Don't 'buse yo Christyun betters."

"Why you bleak um Joss, niggel?" persisted Mr. Lee-Tip.

commencing to edge towards the corner where the kindling-wood was piled up.

"Chile of wraff," replied the Rev. Mr. Smith, knocking the vase full of Joss-sticks off the shelf, which had served for an altar, "unsay dem rash and 'busive words."

By way of reply Mr. Lee-Tip threw a bundle of kindling-wood at his head. The Rev. Mr. Smith dodged it, and it knocked Mr. Hop-Sam under the table.

"Dem dat weels de sword perishes by de sword," cried the Rev. Mr. Smith. "Look out dar, idollytur, I'se a-comin'."

He did not get more than half way, however, before another bundle of wood came in such violent contact with his abdominal region that it doubled him up among the fragments of the shattered idol. For a few minutes there was a species of pyrotechnic display of athleticism all over the laundry. The air was a tangle of arms, legs, pigtales, and the Rev. Mr. Smith's umbrella. When the tempest cleared away Mr. Lee-Tip was bathing a pair of black eyes at the sink, Mr. Hop-Sam was stanching the flow of blood from his nose, Mr. Hong-Lung was repairing damages in the back room, and Mr. Gin-Sing and the Rev. Mr. Smith's wallet had disappeared together.

As for the Rev. Mr. Smith himself, he surveyed the scene of his late adventure from across the street, more in sorrow than in anger, and there was a grim smile on his face as he wiped his razor and returned it to his pocket.

"Day triumphed by dere numbers," he said, "but I guess I gib dem idollyturs a taste of Christyun warfare all the same."

And he started up town, humming the grand old air of "Shiloh" to cheer him on his way.

A JOKE ON A MINISTER.

Several years ago an old darky Southern minister, who was very near-sighted, had a habit of marking in the morning with a cross the verse for the evening's text. One day the verse chosen started at the bottom of one page and finished on the next. Some boys during the day saw the Bible lying open on the pulpit, and determined to play a joke on the minister. They pasted the two leaves of the Bible together so that in turning over the page the old man would turn two over unawares. When evening came the old man proceeded as follows:

"And Noah was an hundred years old and he took unto himself a wife, and she was (here he turns over on the next page) eighty cubits long and forty cubits wide, and was pitched within and without."

He was somewhat surprised, and read the text over again, and in conclusion said:

"Brethern and sistern, I do not remember having seen, or heard or read this verse, but nevertheless there is a lesson in it for us. It shows how fearfully and wonderfully we are made."

DIDN'T LIKE THEIR COMPANY.

Little Johnny was paying his first visit to a Friends' church. He soon became disgusted with the quaint old hats and bonnets, and the "thees" and "thys" of the preacher, and was just about to leave when the preacher exclaimed:

"I want all those who wish to enjoy the eternal life of the beautiful home rise to their feet."

"The congregation rose in a body, but Johnny remained seated. The preacher noticed the little sinner and exclaimed:

"What, my son, doesn't thee wish to go to Heaven?"

"No, siree," said Johnny, with emphasis; "not if this crowd goes."



RAISING THE WIND.

"He bringeth the wind out of his treasuries."—PSALMS CXXXV., 7.

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