

Selections and Comments.

SUDDEN DEATH OF A BLAS-PHEMER.—Recently in Philadelphia a company of vile blasphemers at a reunion undertook to mimic the Lord's supper. They were at the supper table which was well supplied with liquors. The *World* describes the disgraceful affair as follows:

"After they had been seated, one of the men said that the reunion, on account of there being thirteen present, was suggestive of the Last Supper, and while they were eating, drinking and shouting, the boldest among them uttered a terrible oath, and made use of some blasphemous expressions that shocked even his comrades. They all started up with amazement at his words, when suddenly he grew pale, and, putting his hands to his head, complained of pain. It was not until eleven o'clock that this occurred, and the supper had opened shortly after eight.

"I'm afraid it's my last supper, after all," the miserable man moaned. Then clutching his chair and rising with difficulty, he announced to the rest: "I must vacate the chair, boys. You must get some other President. I'm going home." "The man was taken home, and he complained that his head felt as if it had received a terrible blow. His daughter left him when she fancied he had fallen asleep, and the next morning he was found dead in his bed. A horrible smile played over his features, and his eyes were starting out of their sockets 'as if,' said a woman relative in describing it afterward, 'he had seen something awful, and died while staring at it.'"

Let this be a warning to others who presume to make sport of sacred things.

TALMAGE ON INSPIRATION.—A few Sundays ago Dr. Talmage in his discourse said:

"A London fog has fallen on some clergymen, who are at sea as to the inspiration of the Bible. They deny its full inspiration. Genesis to them has become a myth, and they will drift until they land on a continent of mud from which, I fear, they will never extricate themselves. But some say, 'It is indeed from God, but has not been understood until now.' What kind of a father would he be who should write a letter to his children which could not be understood until a thousand years after they were dead, buried, and forgotten? Who make up this precious group of advanced thinkers to whom God has made a special revelation? Are they so noted for piety and disinterestedness that they shall take the place of Paul and John and Christ? On what mount were they transfigured?

What star pointed at them, when they were born? I am filled with two wonders in respect to them—first, what God did without them before they were born, and second, what he will do without them when they are dead. They are doing more damage to the cause of Christianity than could 5,000 Robert Ingersolls in a solid phalanx. Away back in the ages, my ancestor, they say, was an ourang-outang, a tadpole, or a polly-wog; and it took a million years to evolve me."

Yes, there is but little to be feared from avowed infidelity; but when those who pretend to be the best friends of the Bible deal with it as some do the inspiration of Genesis and other portions of the Scriptures, they become its worst enemies. These are the ones who are destroying the faith of many.

HUMILITY.—I believe the first test of a truly great man is his humility. I do not mean by humility doubt of his own power, or hesitation of speaking his opinions; but a right understanding of the relation between what he can do and say, and the rest of the world's sayings and doings. All great men not only know their business, but usually know that they know it; and are not only right in their main opinions, but they usually know that they are right in them, only they do not think much of themselves on that account. Arnolfo knows he can build a good dome at Florence; Albert Dürer writes calmly to one who has found fault with his work, "It cannot be better done;" Sir Isaac Newton knows that he has worked out a problem or two that would have puzzled anybody else; only they do not expect their fellowmen, therefore, to fall down and worship them. They have a curious under-sense of powerlessness, feeling that the greatness is not *in* them, but *through* them; that they could not do or be anything else than God made them—and they see something Divine and God-made in every other man they meet, and are endlessly, foolishly, incredibly merciful.—*Ruskin in "Modern Painters."*

REAL SYMPATHY.—Sickness, ignorance, perplexity and bereavement are burdens which we can alleviate. No matter how unworthy a man may be, he should have our sympathy if he is suffering. But some people get into the habit of talking sympathy who never feel sympathy. They say they are very sorry that Mrs. A. has been so un-

fortunate, and yet they take a great deal of satisfaction in saying so. They talk sympathetically with Mr. B., who has failed in business, and hasten to his forced auction to buy his new piano for 50dols., and bid a shilling per yard on his Brussels carpet. They are sorry Mrs. C. is so poor, but they never buy anything at her shop without beating down the price and making her wait two or three months for her money. No ill-timed curiosity, no unseemly officiousness carries the Christian to the house of mourning. His lips bear no frigid axioms. He may be cheerful, nay, he ought to be cheerful, but with a cheerfulness that is not incompatible with sympathy and sorrow.—*Dr. Howard Crosby.*

ATTACHED TO CHRIST.—The two must be firmly bound together. The Savior and the saved must be firmly bound together. Without this union the strain of each will fall on each, and while the one that can stand it will get safe back again the other will inevitably go down. It will be in vain for him that his friend has left the shore and buffeted the waters and come to the very spot where he is and risked his life for him if he will not allow him to take hold of him; if he persists in keeping apart, he must bear his own strain, and you can see at once what the consequence will be, but if he attaches himself to the other, the strain will be borne by the other, and in this way he will be saved. Hence, of course, the need of faith, which is the grasp of the soul. Just as by the grasp of the hand, or the embrace of the arms, a union of bodies is formed, so by faith the union of spirits is formed. We may, perhaps, see it more plainly if we take a word that applies to the body and to the soul as well, and the word "attach" is, perhaps, as good as any. The drowning man cannot be saved unless he be attached to his deliverer, and in the same way the sinner cannot be saved unless he be attached to Jesus Christ. You see, then, the superlative importance of our Savior's question, "Lovest thou Me?" He does yearn for our love; he does long for us to love him; but it is not altogether for his own sake that he asks that question: it is far more for ours. It is of importance to him that we love him, but it is of far more importance to us, and it is for our sake, chiefly, that

he asks the question, "Lovest thou Me?" When a poor woman marries a rich man, what is the consequence? She leaves her poverty behind her, she rises in the social scale towards him to whom she is attached; her fortunes follow his, but only when they are married. We are now ready for the last text, "Wherefore, my brethren, ye have also become dead to the law by the body of Christ." You see how at once the man who is rescued becomes dead to the law of gravitation. In the same way we are dead to the law, which says: "The soul that sinneth shall die," by the body of Christ. "Wherefore, brethren, ye are become dead unto the law by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead." When we give our hearts to Christ we become attached to him, married to him, as it were, so that we share his fortunes, so that when he rises we rise, and whither he goes we go.—*Dr. Gibson.*

MR. BEECHER'S LAMENTATION.—This really seems to be the age of universal bitter cries. Quite a wail of melancholy comes from the most unexpected source, for who has been for a generation past more genial and joyous than the famous pulpiteer of Plymouth Church? But Mr. Beecher feels full of fear for the future of the Plymouth Church. It is, he says, not so much a church as a spiritual hotel. There is no cohesion. Only a few are left who are willing to pray. There is a danger that Plymouth Church will soon be but a monumental church, and the pastor is disquieted. It is impossible to read this new jeremiad without a sense of sympathy, for there is painful pathos in Mr. Beecher's disappointment at the age of 70 after so brilliant a career. But is there a single thoughtful Christian observer who will be surprised? The end of Dr. Cumming's ministry was painful; so was that of Edward Irving. Many a blazing orb sets in dark clouds. Mr. Beecher's genius has flashed and flamed in the firmament of popularity, but the widest charity would not require us to say that his real usefulness as a minister of the New Testament has been at all commensurate with his social success and worldly celebrity. The Ancient Gospel of Christ has to be hunted for in Mr. Beecher's eloquent sermons, full as they are of much fine mental and moral philosophy. Ministries of philoso-