

STRIKINGS.

It may not be a very appropriate word for a heading, but it looks nice, and anyway sounds better than "Trifles." So, kind readers, let it pass without rough comment.

Many years ago, at the Salem Church, near Springfield, Rev. Dr. Peter Akers preached before President Lincoln, and prophesied the abolishment of slavery and the tyranny of the church. How far this forestalling has been fulfilled it is not very easy to say. Slavery of Africans in the Southern States was abolished by the Secession war three decades ago; but a slavery of white men and women, a slavery nearly as cruel and perhaps more galling, though it is entered into apparently voluntarily by its victims, still exists and is extending. Wealth, and with it ever-increasing power, accumulates and is held by a few, while the great majority of toilers realize painfully that the harder they work the greater is the gain to their employers and the stronger are the chains which bind the workers. With most employers it is no longer a question of what is just in the matter of wages. The query they put to themselves is—for how little can they get this work done? A can do the work as efficiently as B; but B, driven by sheer necessity, is willing to take 25 per cent. less than A, therefore B is employed. And the employers go their way and rejoice, while the employees, divided, jealous of and mistrusting one another, unwilling to act in concert, ignoring the strength they possess, hug more closely the binding chains which by their disunion they so richly merit.

With regard to the abolition of the tyranny of the church foretold by Dr. Peter Akers, we have but to turn to some resolutions passed (or attempted to be passed) by the Synod that was sitting in Winnipeg a few weeks ago. Just censure was bestowed upon the methods adopted by certain churches for getting a share of that filthy lucre for which so many in the world are striving. Auctions, lotteries, sales of useless articles at exorbitant prices, putting up a pretty girl to be kissed at so much per smack,—all such methods were condemned unanimously. But people were to be forced into *giving to God* by being made to pay tithes. One member of the Synod seemed so touched by God's poverty that he proposed that *at least one-tenth* of one's earnings be given to God! Of course, parsons, like church property, had to be exempt from this taxation. And what was odd, no member of the Synod volunteered to inform a sceptical world how these gifts to the Almighty were to be forwarded.

The *North-West Review* of Sept. 16, in speaking of Manchester, Vt., says, after praising the place for its beauty, its good water, and its excellent accommodation for visitors:

"Until now there has been *wanting one need* to make Manchester complete—a cathedral church. If all be well, by next year Our Lord's Presence will find *permanent abode* in a place so fitted for his earthly habitation."

Rejoice, O Manchester, and be glad, for thou hast been found worthy to be a permanent abode for Our Lord's Presence! Jerusalem, with sad memories of her beautiful temples, once the joy of the whole earth, alas! gentiles walk in her streets, and the spot where God's honor dwelt is polluted by heathens! But thou, O Manchester (Vt.), art chosen to be the *permanent abode* of Our Lord's Presence; therefore again I say, Rejoice! And, now that there is so much talk of the world coming to an awful end, what a nice permanent abode Manchester, Vt., will be for our own dear presence!

Some little consternation has been created in certain reli-

gious circles by a Winnipeg preacher likening the Holy Bible to clouds and to tolling bells. Children looking at clouds seem to discover in them any shape that they may wish to see; young people listening to the tolling of bells can make them say whatever they wish to hear; so those who search God's holy word for guidance can find in it any precept they wish to follow! What a reliable guide!

The Rev. S. S. Mitchell, D.D., lately preached at the Presbyterian Church, Buffalo, on the text, "Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of" (2 Tim 3:14). To the orthodox, this sermon may have been convincing; but as an argument in favor of Christianity and addressed to unbelievers it is worthless, for the reverend gentleman simply begs the question he imagines he is discussing; the arguments used are based on the assumption that the Bible is the word of an infallible God. Rightly enough, he states that "the sceptical tendencies of the day are no new thing. They are at least nineteen centuries old." Yes, and much older than that, for I hold it that scepticism is coeval with priestcraft. No sooner did some see in the supernatural a means by which they could overawe and rule the credulous, than others, like Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, rebelled against such tyranny, crying out to the self-made priests, "Ye take too much upon you!" And died the death in their brave defence of liberty. Mr. Mitchell says, "It is true that the spirit of our day is one of restlessness and unfaith; but the existence of this spirit and its justification are two wide-spread things." Granted, but a like accusation could be laid upon Christianity; though this, I suppose, Mr. Mitchell would not admit. "For we must consider that the atmosphere in which our day is plunged is one that our day has created; that which it breathes in is something that it first breathed out." [This is somewhat perplexing, but is followed by something in which most of us will acquiesce.] "The inspiration of to-day is the expiration of yesterday." That is, I presume, each religion, as it passes away, gives rise to a new one, "as warm, as unequalled in bliss," and just as illusive and unsatisfying as those which have preceded it. Then follows the question, "Where else did the spirit of our age come from? The external universe has not changed, . . . the Infinite One is simply unchangeable,—the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever,—and the Bible has received no new additions for centuries."

The unchangeableness of the (Bible) Infinite One is not well authenticated; Bishop Temple, in his contribution to the once famous "Essays and Reviews" speaks of the many methods adopted by the Bible God in teaching his will to man. First unquestioning obedience to the command, "Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it." One thing only asked to be done. Then came bloody sacrifices, accompanied by a multitude of petty rites and observances; then followed teaching of a higher order, and the belittling of former instructions. "Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath showed thee, O man, what is good . . . to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God." And lastly, the bishop said, Jesus was given to the world to be an example. The small matters of childhood, parents' behests as to behavior in public and in private, the rites, sacrifices and ceremonies of the young church were things of the past; the example was to be followed and heaven gained. The example set by Jesus has been followed by those who call themselves his ambassadors in a manner more pleasant