

THE FREETHINKER.

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

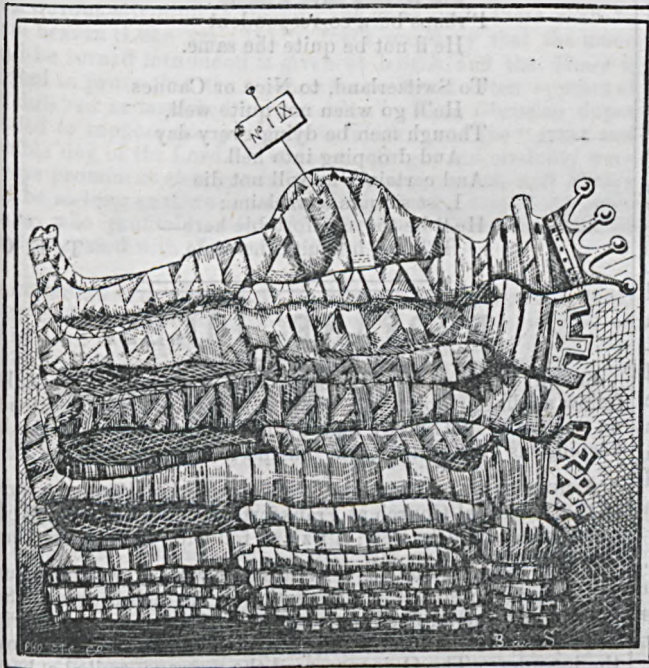
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DAVID'S FAMILY VAULT.

"Rehoboam slept with his fathers."—1 KINGS xiv., 31.

PARKERISM.

DR. PARKER, the theatrical preacher of the City Temple, whose sharp consequential features, bumpy forehead, and bushy hair, are familiar to the public through many photographs, has this year been elected Chairman of the Congregational Union, and his opening Address has set the Dissenting world in a perfect rapture of praise. After reading it carefully through, however, we are unable to see any justification for this passionate eulogy. It seem to us nothing but tawdry rhetoric from beginning to end, with occasional bursts of pulpit claptrap. There is no new idea, nor any fresh presentment of an old one; but on the other hand, there is plenty of specious sentiment and unctuous reiteration of hackneyed platitudes. If this is what the religious world is so proud of, we can only conclude that Christianity is perishing, even more rapidly than we imagined, of softening of the brain, fatty degeneration of the heart, and dropsy of the whole system.

Very early in his address Dr. Parker said that he wanted "a four-faced Faith." Well, we have no objection to that. Christianity has been two-faced for a long while, and if it likes to double its duplicity by all means let it do so. Nay, why should we be surprised if it turns a separate face to every point of the compass?

But Dr. Parker's four faces (he stops at that number for the present) are borrowed from Ezekiel, who is excellent to crib from when you wish to look obscurely magnificent, and to say something grand which neither you nor anyone else can comprehend. They are the face of a lion, the face of an eagle, the face of a cherub, and the face of a man: the first, we presume, to frighten heretics with; the second, to spy and rend the prey; the third, to delude simple credulity; and the fourth, to impose on ordinary men of the world.

Soon after followed a pretty piece of buncombe, which Dr. Parker's brother sky-pilots applauded to the very echo. The sceptic, he said, actually "keeps his day-books and ledgers by reckonings starting from the Bethlehem he

ignores; and dates his letters from the time that the star appeared in the East." Here be reasons! We might as well found an argument for Paganism on the fact that the chronology of the New Testament is never based on the birth of Christ, but always on the reign of the Caesars. Nay more, we might twit the Christians of to-day with being Pagans in their own despite, because they call every day of the week, including their "Lord's Day," after the name of some heathen deity. But we leave all such paltry nonsense to Dr. Parker and his tribe, to whose mental calibre it is eminently suitable.

The bulk of Dr. Parker's discourse was devoted to showing that Congregationalists mean to cling to God, Christ, Immortality and the Bible; a wholly superfluous task, as no one suspected them of intending to relinquish four such profitable doctrines. With respect to deity, he besought them not to "trouble their minds with vain endeavors to define God." "We feel after him," said the speaker; "he is recognised by the heart." After this superb philosophy, it was not surprising that Dr. Parker should repeat the psalmist's impudent remark that "the fool hath said in his heart there is no God." As a matter of fact that is said in the heart, for it is shown in the practice, of nine men out of every ten. Their folly consists in saying it in their hearts only, without having the sense and courage to say it openly. Perhaps that verse was the work of some Jewish Voltaire, who subtly twitted his countrymen with being sensible in conduct, but fools in profession.

Dr. Parker showed a contemptible ignorance in asking why, if man is the god-maker, he did not "invent a more manageable deity." "How came he," he continued, "to invent a God which abases his reason, subdues his will, determines his destiny, claims his homage and rules him with infinite sternness?" Does Dr. Parker suppose that according to the Evolutionist men sat down and deliberately concocted theology? Such an idea is in direct opposition to the very spirit of Evolution. The gods, of whom the Christian deity is merely the name emptied of its contents, prostrated man with their tyrannous power because they represented the incalculable forces of Nature; and they became milder just in proportion as man studied Nature, learned her secrets, and instead of remaining her slave, subdued her more and more to his own will.

Then came a pompous rendering of the old argument that Freethinkers are not flagrantly immoral because they were nearly all brought up as Christians and still live in a Christian atmosphere. Dr. Parker warns his brethren not to let Sceptics "come in the night-time and take away the morality which would have had no existence but for the theology which is denied." In the same strain he says that they "must not allow Christian morality to be baptised into a new name, or revealed commandments to be palmed off as modern inventions." Modern inventions forsooth! Dr. Parker must be presuming on the ignorance of his hearers. Surely the least reflection might assure the most pious believer in revelation that, even without it, men could not have existed all this time without having discovered those primary rules of morality, or in other words, of social health, with which the Decalogue deals. And surely Dr. Parker must be aware that the laws of public and domestic morality were well observed in Egypt, Syria and India, to say nothing of other countries, while the Jews were a horde of degraded slaves or barbaric freebooters; and ages before their tribal deity is alleged to have given their leader Moses a few commandments to keep them from plundering and murdering each other.

With respect to the Bible, Dr. Parker is not going to argue. As he very elegantly said later on, "We are not sent to bandy words with vain-minded oppo-

nents . . . we are entrusted with the trump of God." The natural result is a long discourse without argument but full of noise. Whenever he scents a Sceptic he calls on his brethren to seize their trumpets like the priests who circumnavigated Jericho; but as the age of miracles is past, the Sceptic will not fall like the walls of that city, and when the row is all over the question will remain just where it was before.

All Dr. Parker can say about Christ and immortality is, "I will not let them go." And his brethren shout in chorus, "We won't! We won't!" But progress has a way of conquering the most assinine obstinacy. Dr. Parker and his friends have only one choice. They cannot possibly stand still. They must either be led in front or pushed from behind. At present they prefer the ignominious method, and glory in it as pious fortitude. But they had better mind that the push does not develop into a kick.

Dr. Parker is for liberty, but not for license—in other words, for the right of everybody to imitate him in thought and practice. He naturally turns to France as the home of "Atheistic anarchy," and says that Atheism can "stimulate rebellion, but never build for eternity or bless the peoples with peace." All this is but the rant of the street-corner preacher in a superior dress. France has really made more progress since her "bloody revolution" than any other nation in the world, and her leaders in thought and action have almost invariably been Freethinkers. It is easy enough for the British Philistine to laugh and sneer at "fickle France," but that very "fickleness" is a supreme sign of stability. It means that despite priest-craft, privilege, standing armies, monarchical intrigues and criminal usurpations of power, France has an ineradicable love of freedom and hatred of tyranny; and if she has in the fury of struggle been soiled with dust and stained with blood, these are honorable marks of gallant warfare, and do not mar the loveliness and grace of the martyr-queen of democracy.

Dr. Parker concluded by gushing over the working man. He is one himself, and so are all ministers of Christ. Such is his account, but the real working man, who rises to his hard labor while the sky-pilots are snoring in bed, might give a different version. Let Dr. Parker drive to a workman's club in his carriage and tell them that he is a working man, and if they do not repudiate the fellowship with roars of laughter, we will undertake to do another twelve months in Holloway Gaol. This, by the way, reminds us that, according to Dr. Parker himself, "persecution is not dead, but sleepeth." True, and it never will be dead while Christianity exists. He need not have gone back to the days of George Fox to rake up a few martyrs of Dissent; he might have found some martyrs of a more thorough Dissent within rifle-shot of the City Temple. Freethinkers suffer the martyrdom now and Christians inflict it. But the days of their power are numbered. Those very working men, whom Dr. Parker is now so violently patronising, are irrecoverably alienated from the Church. They sympathise profoundly with Freethought, for they know that it stood up for their rights in the dark days of adversity, while Christianity gave them nothing but a sneer. They will not embrace such fine-weather friends as Dr. Parker, let them swear ever so freely by the rights of man. It is too late.

G. W. FOOTE.

THE SECOND COMING.

WHEN Jesus comes the second time
(The day is near at hand)
He'll find some little change, I think,
In every clime and land.
Will he himself be slightly changed
Since first to earth he came?
Will he have learned a thing or two?
Will he be quite the same?

He will not be so very poor,
Nor yet so wholly sad.
It will not be a carpenter
That he will call his "Dad."
Denouncing riches and the rich
Will hardly be his game—
He'll speculate in stocks and shares,
He'll not be quite the same.

He'll graduate at Oxford,
And then search out, I ween,
A parish where the souls to save
Are few and far between.

His love for men will scarcely be
A strong devouring flame—
It is vulgar to be earnest;
He'll not be quite the same.

He'll have a livery of black,
Well cut in broad-cloth good;
And, when he vanity condemns,
Will wear a scarlet hood.
While in a drawling, sing-song tone
Salvation he'll proclaim,
And read a sermon which he bought:
He'll not be quite the same.

His prayers genteel will be intoned
In F—no doubt the key
In which he agonised with God
In dark Gethsemane!
He'll play at tennis and croquet;
For flirting have a name;
P'rhaps be a co-respondent—
He'll not be quite the same.

To Switzerland, to Nice or Cannes
He'll go when not quite well,
Though men be dying every day
And dropping into hell.
And certainly he will not die
Lost sinners to reclaim;
He'll be too comfortable here—
He'll not be quite the same.

T. E. C.

PROFANE JOKES.

SUNDAY FISHING—"My boy," said a clergyman to a little fellow angling, "don't you know it is very wicked to catch fish on Sunday?" "Guess I hain't sinned much yet," said the boy, keeping his eyes on the cork, "hain't had nary bite."

A MEMBER of the Kentucky Legislature, who attended a service of the Episcopal Church at Frankfort, was asked how he liked it, and replied, "Parly well; I riz and fell with them every time!"

A MAN from Columbus, O., visited New York, went to church, and seated himself without hesitation in the nearest pew. Soon the owner came in, eyed the stranger critically, and then, writing "My pew" on the fly-leaf of a Prayer-book, handed the book to the intruder. The Ohio man read the message, smiled a beautiful smile, and wrote underneath, "Nice pew. What did you pay for it?"

SINCE George was converted at the Salvation Army barracks a fortnight ago, he has been hard at work crucifying the flesh. Yesterday he remarked: "I feel so happy; my heart is full of love; I love everybody." He then, quite unintentionally, sat on an inverted drawing-pin. He got up immediately and made a few hasty observations on a different subject. The office-boy was busy for the rest of the afternoon applying raw steak to his eye, and making disrespectful remarks about the "Army." It is not always safe to rely upon the total eradication of the old Adam.

ACID DROPS.

A REPORT of a lecture by Mr. G. Harwood, M.A., on "The Bible as Literature," is sent us, which contains several statements which would be astounding in their display of ignorance were they not so frequent. We are told that the Bible is "not only the oldest, the most complete, the most guarded, but the best authenticated literature in the world." The Egyptian Papyrus, the Hindu Rig Veda and parts of the Persian Avesta, and the Chinese Shot King, are older than any portion of the Jew books. The Bible itself refers to the books of Jasher and of Gad, the "Wars of the Lord," and the books of Nathan the prophet, the prophecy of Abijah and the visions of Iddo, so, without mentioning the fourteen books of the Apocrypha, the Bible can hardly be called complete. The hundreds of thousands of various readings testify to the divine care with which it has been guarded, and there is scarcely an authentic book in the lot, from the writings falsely ascribed to Moses to the Revelation which many early Christians ascribed to Cerinthus.

THE *Tyldesley Chronicle* has the following amusing illustration of the "association of ideas" in a youthful mind:—In one of the schools in the Leigh district last week, one of the masters was teaching Scripture. The subject of the lesson was Noah. During the lesson the question was asked how many sons had Noah, and what were their names? One of the lads answered "Shem." "What was the name of the other?" None of the lads answered. "What have you to dinner sometimes?" "Bacon," cried one of the boys. "Well," says the master, "it is not bacon, but very like it;" at which one answered "Ham." The next question asked was "What was the name of the other son?" Whereupon one of the boys, anxious not to be outdone, held out his hand and said, "Please, sir, Eggs!"

SIXTEEN youths were charged at Nottingham with obstructing the public highway and throwing stones. Six hundred people, it appears, assembled outside a Roman Catholic mission-room, but the Rev. Father Elkins came out and told them they could not get in, and then went to a window upstairs from which he edified the crowd by singing "For he's a jolly good fellow." He varied the entertainment by smoking a cigar and by calling the people a lot of blackguards. The reverend Father explained to the bench that his conduct merely arose from high spirits and love of fun. The magistrates dismissed the defendants, holding that Father Elkins had really caused the obstruction by his extraordinary behavior.

THE *Christian Herald* tries to make capital out of the recent eclipse of the moon. It speaks of periods when "the heavenly hieroglyphics speak in their unique eloquence as prophets of doom;" and it concludes that "we have entered upon such an era," so that occurrences once commonplace must be regarded with devout attention as among "the great signs there shall be from heaven (Luke xxi., 11)." Joel's prophecy that the moon shall be turned into blood is given at length, and the *Times* is quoted to prove that the moon when eclipsed often appears of a "dull red or tarnished copper color." Thus Christian dupes are led to suppose that prophecy is fulfilled, and the "great and notable day of the Lord" is at hand. Fright and credulity were always prominent elements in religious movements, and always will be so long as there is a rich harvest to be reaped by charlatans who profitably minister to credulous ignorance and to minds diseased with the canker of faith.

ACCORDING to the Rev. R. H. Faulconer, of St. Michael's, Lewes, every one who does not give one tenth of his income to God is a thief, and can hardly be called a Christian. By "God," Mr. Faulconer means himself and his fellow clergymen. They never pass the money on to God so far as we know. Christian enforcement of tithes is not thieving. It is the refusal to acquiesce in the compulsory abstraction of one's earnings which is theft according to the ideas of such Christians as Mr. Faulconer.

THE Rev. R. Glover, President of the Baptist Union, took for the subject of his inaugural address "Our Duty to Unbelievers and Heathens." Of unbelief, he said, "It meets us in works of science, in our light literature, in works of history; it utters itself in our houses of legislature; it affects the masses of our large cities. Worse than all it enters our churches." The supernatural, he admits, has grown more incredible. "The armory of Paleyan apologetics is like the obsolete muskets of a former generation, interesting, but altogether valueless. We find ourselves, therefore, like Israel in the days of Saul—numerous but weaponless."

AFTER this one is astonished to read that the attitude of the Church of Christ should be one of complete security as to the results. *Faith*, says Mr. Glover, comes not of argument. "No man can call Jesus Lord but by the Holy Ghost." To rely on the Holy Ghost to meet infidelity is even more fatuous than to attempt to mop out the Atlantic with a broom.

DEALING with Heathendom, Mr. Glover says, that by the close of the first century of our era, some half-million of persons had been gathered to the new creed. Why did they not keep on at that rate? All the world would have been Christian long ago, instead of three-fourths being still not even nominally Christian. We are unaware, moreover, how Mr. Glover arrives at his computation. At the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, A.D. 70, the Christians were so insignificant in their head-quarters that they are not even mentioned by Josephus. The Revelation of John, according to orthodox authorities, was written at the close of the first century, and the writer only addressed himself to the seven churches all within a narrow territory in Asia Minor. He evidently didn't regard the followers of Paul as of the true Church of John.

By the way, the revelation of John would be a better title considering how the writer reviles those who are of the synagogue of Satan (chap. ii.), and all married people (xiv. 4), and those who add unto his crack-brained book.

SUPERSTITION dies hard. No less than four advertisements of astrologers occur in the columns of the *Medium*, and double that number from "magnetic healers."

THE Bishop of Oxford, presiding over a conference of the clergy and laity of his diocese, said, that the most important question now before the English people was that relating to marriage with a deceased wife's sister. More important than the Franchise question—than the political emancipation of two million men? Miserably, indeed, must ecclesiasticism distort the minds of learned dignitaries when so exaggerated and prurient and bigoted a view of a wise, just, and popular Bill is publicly put forward. The Bishop actually declared that "With Lord Hatherley, he would prefer the landing of a French army at Dover to the passing of that measure, for the army could be got rid of, but once passed, the Act legalising those marriages could never be repealed." The Bishop is a fanatic first and an English-

man afterwards. Much religion hath made him mad. The torrent of public opinion will sweep him and his opposition alike into the limbo of extinct absurdities.

THE *Liberal* thinks that next to hanging a man the worst use you can put him to is to make a parson of him.

At the autumn session of the Congregational Union the Rev. G. S. Reaney "laid down the principle that poverty was chiefly caused by the poor being underpaid and overworked." Sapient discovery! People are poor because their wages are low. This reverend gentleman will also be able to enlighten us with the information that famine is caused by scarcity of food, death by the cessation of life, the brilliancy of the sun by the abundant light it emits, and so forth. The remedy, said this blind leader of the blind, is "not in the brutal teachings of political economy," but in "Christian Socialism." "Market price" is to be turned "out of doors," and a "fair day's wage," fixed, we suppose, by Act of Parliament, is to take its place. Heavenly guidance is supposed to be the best substitute for "brutal" knowledge of facts and scientific deductions therefrom. The ministers, of course, in the subsequent discussion, carefully avoided reference to the primary cause of poverty—over-population. When the world is converted to Malthusianism the parsons will have the pluck to step in and claim the merit and the reward because Malthus was a clergyman. At present they are rank cowards in the matter. They fear Mrs. Grundy too much.

MR. AYLEN wants the assizes brought to St. Albans because it is a place "so marvellously near to God" (who is usually supposed to be everywhere) and is so full of religious associations that Church ministers and dissenting ministers come there to "whisper to the stars and the angels." After all the proposal is not inappropriate. Criminality and religion are more nearly connected than the pious suppose.

COMMENTING on the case of the Reverend Charles Grey, who is "connected with the aristocracy of the country," the *Sporting Chronicle* says: "It is the custom at Church Congresses for pious speakers to lament over the spread of what they are pleased to call 'infidelity'—which simply means that it is difficult to induce people to attend churches and chapels. . . . Neither Charles Bradlaugh nor any other outsider has induced so many people to give up church-going as the men within the Church. It is through such vile beasts as the *reverend gentleman* acquitted yesterday at Croydon that people are kept out of places of worship, for not even Foote's boldest caricatures nor Bradlaugh's most effective arguments have as much persuasive power as the private lives of those appointed to disseminate the principles of religion." This reverend corrupter of youth is now "anxious to return to his parish to perform the duties he has in hand." We should think his parishioners would give him a warm welcome.

In the *Daily News* account of the Dairy Show at the Agricultural Hall, we read that "Her Majesty did well in the piggery, taking first prize in the small white class."

ACCORDING to the *Christian Herald*, a certain converted constable, "a man remarkable for agility and strength," is tempted during his nightly rounds by the Devil, who, with very little of the cunning for which he was once famed, reproaches the pious policeman with his dreadful sins. "At last," says this policeman, "God showed me how to meet my enemy. I got my Bible and turned down a leaf at the first chapter of the first epistle of John, and when I went on duty I put the Bible in my pocket. About midnight, as usual, the enemy began to tell me what a wicked fellow I had been. I let him go on with his temptations for awhile, and then I took out the blessed book, and opening it at the place I had prepared, turned my bull's-eye right on the words—'The blood of Jesus Christ, his son, cleanseth us from all sins,' and I said, 'Satan, canst thou see that?' and, sir, the tempter was gone in a moment, and I had one of the happiest nights I have ever known. I now no more think of going out without my Bible than I do without my lamp, and as Satan knows I am ready for him, he now rarely comes near me."

BUT what would our policeman do if the Devil flew away with him and perched him on the gilt cross of St. Paul's as he did Christ on the pinnacle of the temple? If the sergeant found the saint in blue off his beat, would such an excuse for unavoidable absence be held valid by Christian authorities? We rather think he would have his pension stopped and be dismissed as unsound in mind, or as drunken, or as a big liar, or as all three. But the Bible tale of Christ's temptation is nevertheless perfectly true on pain of twelve months' in Holloway Gaol.

THE congregation of St. Mark's Church, Victoria Park, are at loggerheads with their trustees, who have appointed a clergyman thoroughly disliked by the members of the church. A hostile meeting at the mission-hall adjoining the church was prevented by the churchwarden, who took away the keys and retired to the parsonage. An exciting scene then took place. The lawn was crowded with members of the congregation who hooted and called out offensive names. Four of the members, who followed up the churchwarden to obtain the keys, were soon involved in a squabble which became a personal struggle, in which serious blows

were exchanged. Subsequently they were summoned for assault. After investigating the case for several hours the magistrates had to adjourn the summonses. The defendants refuse to apologise and insist on the case proceeding.

THE Christian meekness and brotherly love of the district is now engaged in circulating "poetry," in which is narrated—

"The doings at the village of Toady-cum-Sneak
Where idiots bow with Judas' smile
And hate from week to week."

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL is well known as a person of exemplary piety. In the report of his speech at Leeds there are no less than three familiar references to the Deity in the space of a column. "Good God!" "God only knows!" and "For God's sake!" follow each other in rapid succession. Such pious ejaculations from a serious Christian politician with the fear of the third commandment before his eyes must not be confounded with the fervid utterances of faith so racily commented on by James Thomson in his extraordinary essay on "Religion in the Rocky Mountains," published in the new volume of "Satires and Profanities."

THE Rev. C. R. Elrington has made a brilliant discovery. This year's good harvest is not due to physical causes, nor is there any truth in the theory of a ten years' cycle. The fact of our having a hot summer and a fine crop in 1884, as in 1874, is owing to a special cause. This is the first year of ten in which there has been a lull in the "persecution" of ritualists, and "God has smiled on us." Well, if the Lord's smile is so fruitful in blessings it is a great pity that the clergy do not get up a society for the purpose of tickling him from June to September. He would still have eight or nine months to frown in, and that appears to us long enough even for one of his notorious bad temper.

BIG Salvation bills are out at Hull announcing a "Great Ham and Glory Tea," a "Baptism of Fire," a "great Come and See Meeting," and other attractions of the usual kind. Every soldier and friend is also requested to pray for "large sums of money" to extend the work.

A BURGLAR was caught last week with four religious tracts in his pocket. Perhaps he had a sensitive conscience, and the assurance that he could easily wash away his sins at any time in the blood of the Lamb was a great consolation and support to him in his trying business. Without this sure and certain hope burglary might have been unendurable as a regular occupation.

LORD MAYOR FOWLER preached a sermon last Sunday in a Baptist chapel at Watford. A more interesting discourse would be a selection from his post-prandial conversation and his lobby and refreshment-room chat in the House of Commons. Freethinkers will remember that it was this same Fowler who cried "Kick him out" when Mr. Bradlaugh was struggling against fourteen policemen in August 1881. Ever since then he has been growing more and more pious without any other perceptible change of character, and being rich and influential, he is of course welcomed with open arms in religious circles. We wish them joy of their catch. The more Fowlers there are on the Christian side the more it is brought into disrepute, and the easier is the work of Freethought.

THE *Clonmel Chronicle* has an article, or more probably an old sermon, on "The Tenderness of the Bible," which it well says is "more than human." Jahveh showed his tenderness to his own people by afflicting them with plagues and by giving them, as Ezekiel says, "statutes that were not good and judgments whereby they should not live." His tenderness to others was exemplified by ordering their wholesale extermination. As our Irish correspondent says: "By the thirteen crucified Jesus Christs, but this bangs Banagher, and Banagher banged the 'Divel'!"

HENRY VARLEY, the evangelist butcher, appears to have settled his man at last. After hearing some of his quack lectures, Edward Stevens, a compositor at Eyre and Spottiswoode's, fell into a state of great depression, and at last committed suicide by jumping from the top of a house and impaling himself on the iron railings. He left behind him a letter containing references to Varley's lectures, trusting that God would watch over his wife, and describing himself as "a hell-bound sinner." His wife and friends, however, declared that he was a very good fellow, but of strong emotional tendencies; and that after hearing Varley he was subject to constant hallucinations. Varley's quack pamphlet appears to have put the final touch on the poor fellow's madness. The best thing, therefore, this pious spouter can do is to provide for the unfortunate widow out of the profits of his preaching and the sale of his pamphlets. In any well-conducted society he would be found guilty of manslaughter.

THE clergy of Stratford-on-Avon protest against the annual fair, and ask to "be freed from such disgusting sights and smells as those of half-roasted oxen and pigs in our streets, stopping our best thoroughfares, and suggestive of nothing but cannibalism." These sky-pilots forget that the smell of roast oxen was

the most grateful of all perfumes in the nostrils of Jahveh, and he only objected to roast pig on sectarian grounds. When the people of Stratford try to be perfect, even as their Father in heaven is perfect, the sky-pilots denounce them. What are they to do? And why should these men in black fling the word "cannibalism" at their fellows with perfect impunity, while we may be prosecuted (as we were) for saying the same thing of old Jahveh himself. Telling the truth about a dead god is worse than libelling living men.

THE Rev. J. W. Horsley, chaplain of Clerkenwell prison, who read a paper at the Church Congress on obscene literature, and called on the authorities to stamp it out, has, we learn, been a great sinner in that line himself. We are informed that he was at one time a member of the Holy Cross Society, whose book, the "Priest in Absolution," was in many parts so obscene that the printer dared not put his name to it. There may be, after all, some truth in the remark that Christians prosecute "blasphemy" and "indecent" because they want a monopoly of both.

ONE of the subjects "discussed" at the Church Congress was "The Advantages of an Established Church." The black-coated religionists for hire were unanimously of opinion that an Established Church was a great advantage—to themselves.

NINETY-TWO men and eleven women are awaiting trial for heresy at Novomoskoffsk, in Russia. They are seceders from the Orthodox Church, and disbelieve in the sacrament and holy pictures. Reports add that they "lead sober and industrious lives." Of course they do. People who are persecuted by the Church never do anything else.

THE Rev. E. Casey, of Meonstoke, has in the Bishop's Waltham County Court, recovered 20l. from the Vicar of Shaftesbury, who engaged him to preach at the magnificent salary of a pound per week. After the first sermon he was dismissed on the ground that he made his hearers laugh. We should advise Publican Booth to engage the Rev. E. Casey. Parsons who make their hearers laugh are rare, and their services must be dirt cheap at a sovereign weekly.

BOOTH's "Grecian" scheme, for which he got a "fiver" from the late Archbishop of Canterbury, has been a woeful failure. At the recent meeting of the Middlesex magistrates, an application for both music and dancing licences was made.

MARIA WHEATLEY, of Long Eaton, has summoned Henry Orchard, of Stapleford, to show cause why he should not contribute to the maintenance of her child. Both are members of the Salvation Army. They wrote to each other as Brother and Sister in Christ.

MARTHA HARRIS, another worthy town missionary, and Scripture reader at Padstow, had a similar summons against John Crag Tallick, the Christian young man she took as lodger. Of such are the kingdom of heaven!

A CORRESPONDENT tells us of the annoyance to which patients who visit St. Mark's Hospital are subjected by a parson, who preaches hell-fire and damnation to all who come there, and who, upon observing some of his tracts thrown down, denounced the patients as "throwing away salvation never to be regained. He had seen such men dying in fearful agony, and he and God standing at their bedside laughing at them." Nice chaplain this, and nice God to match him. Our correspondent left a few "Freethinker Tracts" behind, and says "No Freethinker should be without them."

At the annual meeting of the Regent's Park Baptist College, the Rev. James Stephens declared that if they could have the text of the Bible as it was written, every word would be found to be inspired. This worthy should know that in the New Testament alone there are over a hundred thousand various readings. What is the worth of the inspired revelation which fails to keep the text as written? If the Holy Ghost inspired the penmen, he ought to have kept an eye on their manuscripts. But not only are no originals known, but we have no testimony that they ever were.

THE earliest manuscripts of the New Testament do not date beyond the fourth or fifth century, and they are almost undecipherable. We presume the originals written at the dictation of the Holy Ghost were too sublime for mortal eyesight, which accounts for their never having been seen.

In the *Dublin Review* St. George Mivart says: "It is a fact, as scientifically certain as the revolution of the earth round the sun, that the various races of existing land animals have never radiated from a common centre since man inhabited this planet." How is that for Genesis, which says that two of all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, went into Noah's menagerie, and that outside "all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, of cattle and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man?"

SPECIAL NOTICE.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Saturday, Oct. 18, Secular School-Room, Pole Lane, Failsworth:—7, "Twelve Months in a Christian Gaol."
 Sunday, Oct. 19, Grosvenor Assembly Rooms, 125 Grosvenor Street, All Saints', Manchester:—11, "Messrs. Moses and Aaron;" 3, "The Spirit of Man;" 6.30, "Will Christ Save us?"
 Thursday, Oct. 23, Hall of Science, Old Street, London, at 8.30, "The Roots of Christianity.—IV. The Bible."

October 26, Plymouth.

November 2, Burnley; 3, Atherton; 9, Birmingham; 16, Nottingham; 23, Hall of Science, London; 25, Claremont Hall, London; 30, Hall of Science.

December 2, Claremont Hall; 6, Cramlington; 7, South Shields; 9, Claremont Hall, London; 14, Oldham; 16, Claremont Hall, London; 21, Hall of Science, London; 28, Milton Hall, London.

January 4, Rochdale; 11, Huddersfield; 18 and 25, Milton Hall.

February 1, Claremont Hall, London; 22, Liverpool.

CORRESPONDENTS.

ALL business communications to be addressed to the Manager, Mr. W. J. Ramsey, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C. Literary communications to the Editor, 28 Stonecutter Street, London.

The *Freethinker* will be forwarded, directly from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3s.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS:—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 3s.; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions.

RECEIVED WITH THANKS.—W. Rudd, J. Butler, W. C. S., M. P.

C. BENTLEY.—He must be "a thorough-paced scoundrel" who would apply that epithet to Richard Carlile, the man to whom above all others we owe freedom of the press. We venture the assertion that the only excuse the writer could give would be that Carlile published "Every Woman's Book," a Malthusian publication, as well as such "infidel" publications as Palmer's "Principles of Nature" and Paine's "Age of Reason." The Vice Society prosecuted him for the latter, but not for the former. There was a life of Carlile by G. J. Holyoake, but it is out of print. A memoir of R. Taylor is given in the "Devil's Pulpit."

BRUNO.—We should have been very happy to report the matter if we had been apprised of it in time, but of course it is no use being a week behind the fair. The fault, if any, lies with those who furnished us with no hint of the proceedings.

J. WOOLGAR.—Has already appeared. We receive a copy of that old bill for repairing Joseph, ornamenting the Ghost, repainting the Virgin and making a new nose for the Devil, almost every week. Other correspondents will doubtless take warning, and save their time and stamps.

J. IRELAND.—The Christian who told you that all the houses standing in his Savior's time were washed away by the flood, is a very fair sample of orthodoxy. The Bible is practically a sealed book to them. They buy a nice gilt-edged copy and keep it cleaner than any other book in the house.

W. G. K.—Thanks. Always glad to receive cuttings.

R. G.—We would answer your letter if you put your name. We do not reply to anonymous communications.

M. SHORT asks whether "Joshua Josephson" is to be followed by more from the same source, as he would much like to have as good a treat every month.

STAINCH BELIEVER.—Shall appear.

G. TAYLOR.—Send us more as often as you like.

MAHOMET.—You can obtain what you want of Mr. Ramsey for the price you mention. We are obliged to print more than our weekly circulation to allow for trade returns, and we are always glad to supply old numbers at a reduced rate for gratuitous distribution. We cannot answer your second question. A copy of our Christmas Number was sent to the British Museum.

W. DODD.—As we are always overcrowded with copy, it is impossible to say when any particular contribution will appear. Glad to hear that you have made two converts already, and that your brother became an Atheist while studying for the Church. Our publisher has attended to the business part of your letter.

W. O. SAVILLE.—Thanks for the cuttings and the suggestions for a sketch, which may prove useful.

S. BROWN.—The vagaries of the Salvationists are too stale by this time, or we would insert your experiences. Colonel Robert Ingersoll, Washington, is a sufficient address.

C. R. REEVES.—Thanks; it may serve the artist to start from.

J. SHORR.—Cuttings are always welcome. The other matter is one you must decide for yourself. If you resolve to do anything, communicate with Mr. Ramsey.

AN ATHEIST WHITESMITH.—Good for a beginning. Try again, and the day will come when you will thank us for not publishing your "first attempt."

J. BELL.—Mathematics is the only *exact* science. It is only an arbitrary classification which distinguishes between "pure sciences" and any other.

J. ROBSON (Cheltenham).—We are glad to hear of Freethought progress in your town. It is the fault of the newsagent that you do not get your papers regularly. Thanks for your good wishes.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Manchester Guardian—Dundee Evening Telegraph—Huddersfield Examiner—Sporting Chronicle—Northampton Guardian—Devon Evening Express—Echo—Christian Herald—Christian Commonwealth—Truthseeker—Bolton Evening News—West Sussex Gazette—Luton Reporter—South Australian Chronicle—Herts Observer—Mercury (Tasmania)—Eastern Argus—Liberal (Boston, U.S.)—Pittsburgh Truth—Liberty and Property Defence League—Salvation Army bills—Devon Express—Swindon Adventurer—Echo—Philosophical Inquirer.

SUGAR PLUMS.

DESPITE the incessant rain, there was an excellent audience at the London Hall of Science to hear the second of Mr. Foote's course of lectures on the "Roots of Christianity." The Rev. J. B. Heard was again present, and spoke for twenty minutes after the lecture. As this number of the *Freethinker* will be in our London readers' hands before the delivery of the third lecture on "Christ" (Oct. 23—not 26th, as erroneously printed on the tickets), it may be stated that Mr. Heard will not be able to attend, but the Christian Evidence Society will send another opponent. The chair will be taken by Mr. W. W. Collins.

THIS course of lectures has evidently attracted a good deal of attention, for we notice a paragraph on them in the London letter of more than one provincial journal. One of the writers appears astonished at the courteous reception given to Mr. Heard, and no less astonished to find that "Mr. Foote is, to do him justice, a most eloquent lecturer and a clear reasoner."

HALIFAX gave Mr. Foote a very hearty welcome last Sunday. There was a very fine audience in the Odd Fellows' Hall at night, and from the way in which they applauded it is clear that Freethinkers are far more numerous there than is generally supposed. Unfortunately, there was a rumor that the bigots, who had, by working on the authorities, driven the Halifax Secularists from place to place, were taking steps to prevent their having the use of the Odd Fellows' Hall again. We hope the rumor was unfounded, but we shall not be surprised if it is true. In any case we trust that the Halifax Branch will persist in its good work, and by some means or other defy the malice of its persecutors.

THERE are so few lady lecturers on the Freethought platform that we have especial pleasure in announcing that Miss Thornton Smith lectures at Milton Hall, London, this evening (Oct. 19) on "The Doctrine of Eternal Torture."

MESSRS. TRUBNER announce the life and works of Giordano Bruno as in preparation for their "English and Foreign Philosophical Library."

WE are pleased to observe that the London Missionary Society state their income as some £10,000 less than last year. Can we hope that the scandal of sending money to heathen lands, while Englishmen are starving at home, is dying out?

THE *Manchester Examiner* inserts further correspondence on the exclusion of *Progress* and *Our Corner* from the Manchester Free Libraries. All the writers censure this act of bigotry, and one of them hopes every candidate will be questioned on the subject at the municipal elections in November.

A LONG law suit, entered into by the authorities in Paris for the removal of a modern vestry added to the church of St. Nicholas des Champs, and projecting beyond the legal building line, has ended in a decree for the removal of the objectionable structure for the formation of a new street. The Curé, anxious for the honors of martyrdom, publicly invited the press to come and see him turned out. A crowd was thus attracted, who entered the church and smoked their pipes, and liberally dispensed the holy water without money and without price. They went away immediately ordered to do so by the police. The official from the municipality only called to make an appointment to discuss the matter another day. The clerical papers are making capital out of this trivial affair. They cry out that the Reign of Terror has returned, and that Paris is in the worst days of 1797. It takes very little to make a Christian martyr. The "shrieking sisterhood" must emphatically include the old women of the Vatican and the old maids called priests.

IN regard to healing by faith and other alleged miraculous cures, Prof. Newman has some excellent remarks in his new work on "Christianity in its Cradle," a review of which will appear in next month's number of *Progress*. He gives a personal experience which is worth quoting: "When I returned from abroad in 1833, a lady eagerly inquired the details of my miraculous recovery from sickness. I did not understand her question. She explained: 'I was told that in desperate fever you were anointed with oil in the name of the Lord, and that restored you to health.' Most true (I replied) that I was thus anointed, but the fever got worse. After a sixth violent sweating it finally left me, unable to rise from the bed for a fortnight; and only after six months, by help of riding, I gradually regained my muscle. That there was any miracle never occurred to me. The lady was much disappointed. I believe she had trumpeted the cure." How many widely-trumpeted miracles would be susceptible of as simple explanation if we knew the facts.

"THE Strange History of Joshua Josephson" has caused a good deal of excitement already, and we predict that it will cause more. Freethinkers are beginning to find out what it is, and as soon as they learn they are anxious to have a copy. One correspondent fancies he has seen the illustrations before, and opines that Joseph Josephson is really Joshua the son of None;

but the publishers stick to their story told in the preface, and protest that they could never think of practising a deception on the public. They also declare that they were expressly assured by the American scholar, who induced them to publish it, that it contained nothing of a blasphemous character.

CANON FAIRFAR has been laughing at those who are always denouncing the "intemperate language" of reformers. "All strong language," he says, "will be regarded as intemperate by those interested in a monopoly it assails. Men do not like to hear things, however true, which scarify the callousity of an immoral acquiescence." Good; but it is a great pity that Canon Fairfar did not speak in this way when we were sent to prison for using "intemperate language" about his own creed.

"SATIRES AND PROFANITIES."*

In my opinion James Thomson is the ablest English writer who has employed his pen in the service of Freethought. I say this with full consciousness of the great writers who have left larger and more important works. I am not unmindful of the telling thrusts of Paine, the clear, polished periods of Hume, or the "solemn sneer" of Gibbon; nor do I forget the army of living writers who, in thoughts that breathe and words that burn, have advanced our cause. I am convinced the ablest among them will agree in surrendering the palm for literary merit to James Thomson.

As the poet of Pessimism, Thomson occupies a unique place in English literature. The present handsome volume is enough to prove that his position as a prose satirist is beside Swift. The use of effective satire is one of the rarest of literary endowments, implying as it does finesse of touch and depth of perception, as surely as humor implies breadth of sympathy. Of these gifts Thomson had abundant share. In the phrase of Sir Thomas More he is "quick and fine witted."

The Christian creed is so full of absurdities that, from the time of Lucian downwards, it has been the subject of ridicule to all with the intelligence and daring to stand outside of its pale. Woolston, Voltaire, Taylor and Southwell found in the Jew-books fruitful themes for the exercise of their wit, and one might be tempted to think that ridicule of religion would become as stale as religious sermons themselves.

A perusal of these newly-published "Satires and Profanities" would rudely undeceive any Christian who indulged the hope that satire on his creed was played out. There is not a dull page in the book, and it is full of original and striking raillery. I know of no book to compare with it. It is not only clever, but convincing; full of the pleasantest reading, yet withal animated by a purpose. The wit arises from fecundity of ideas, and the reader is not only forced to smile, but also to think.

The first paper on "The Devil in the Church of England," though founded on the *cause célèbre* of Jenkins v. Cook, is likely to be of interest as long as Christian Theists believe in God the Devil. "Religion in the Rocky Mountains," now printed in full for the first time, is a rollicking description of religious and irreligious life in the Far West, in which the fun and profanity are sustained till one roars with laughter. "The Story of the Famous Old Jewish Firm" has been already published in several forms, and thousands have laughed over the transactions of Jah, Son and Co., from the time of the first dealings of the firm to the result of the undertaking to supply the new bread of life, which occasions so much wind on the stomach. Those who have not read should read it. Those who have read it are sure to read it again.

"Christmas Eve in the Upper Circles" is another audacious and ludicrous piece of profanity, appropriately followed by "A Word on Blasphemy," written anent the publication of Southwell's "Fanatical Monkeys," familiar to all readers of the prosecuted Christmas Number of the *Freethinker*.

Thanks to Samuel Morley, the paper on the *Daily News*, with the ten commandments of the fashionable journalist, is as applicable now as when first written. "Jesus: as God; as a Man," is a serious argument against the orthodox creed, from which I make an extract, not as a sample of Thomson's style, but as pertinent to the object of the *Freethinker* :—

* "Satires and Profanities," by James Thomson (B.V.), with a preface by G. W. Foote. London: Progressive Publishing Company, 28 Stonecutter Street, E.C.; 1884.

"The whole scheme of the Atonement, as planned by God, is based upon a crime—a crime infinitely atrocious, the crime of murder and deicide, is essential to its success. If Judas had not betrayed, if the Jews had not insisted, if Pilate had not surrendered, if all these turpitudes had not been secured, the Atonement could not have been consummated. Need one say more? Sometimes, when musing upon this doctrine, I have a vision of the God-man getting old upon the earth, horribly anxious and wretched, because no one will murder him. Judas has succeeded to a large property, and would not be tempted to betray him by three hundred pieces of silver; the chief priests and elders think him insane, and therefore, as Orientals, hold him in a certain reverence; Pilate is henpecked and superstitious, accounts the wife's dreams oracular, and will have nothing to do with him; even Peter won't deny him, although he has restored Peter's mother-in-law to life. The situation is desperate. He has again and again prayed his Father to despatch a special murderer to despatch him, yet none appears. Shall he have to perish by old age or disease? May he be compelled to commit suicide? Must he go back to Heaven unsacrificed, foiled for want of an assassin?"

"The Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus" is another telling exposure of the Christian creed, such as no Christian can read without detriment to his orthodoxy. "The One Thing Needful" is an exquisite piece of satire, urging that Christians should entirely refrain from bringing into the world fresh heirs for damnation. "The Swinburne Controversy" is a noble and much-needed defence of plain speaking as against the hypocritical "proprieties" of Bumbledom. "Great Christ is Dead" is an original exposition of the truth that "Fate in the form of Science has decreed the extinction of the gods." This essay, like many others, exhibits the results of extensive reading in the world's choicest and rarest literature. "Some Muslim Laws and Beliefs" gives, with admirable condensation and inimitable comment, particulars of the religion of modern Egyptians, as found in the great work of Lane. In narrow compass the reader will find more and better information concerning the faith of Islam than is to be found in many larger works. Indeed, when he contrasts the "glowing and glorious prospects held out to the faithful by the Kurân, with the everlasting singing in white night-gowns, amidst the howling of elders and composite beasts all over eyes (what our Heine terms 'all the menagerie of the Apocalypse'), in adoration of a god like a jasper and sardine stone to look upon, and of a Lamb with seven horns and seven eyes," he may be tempted to exclaim with the author, "Would that I had been born among the Muslims and brought up in the faith of El Islâm!" The expression of this pious wish evoked the indignation and horror of the *Christian World* at its "blasphemous irreverence." This afforded scope for an able reply, entitled, "The *Christian World* and the *Secularist*."

"The Athanasian Creed" lends itself naturally to satire, and, with its three incomprehensibles who are yet one incomprehensible, may, like Falstaff, boast of being witty itself and the cause of wit in others. "Our Obstructions" is a powerful indictment of the Church, the Christian Creed and the Throne. A paper entitled "The Primate on the Church and the World" is as applicable to Archbishop Benson as it was to Archbishop Tait. "Spiritism in the Police Court," though dealing with an ephemeral incident, contains matters of abiding interest. Indeed, it may be said as truly of Thomson as of Goldsmith, "Nullam tetegit quod non ornavit"—he touched nothing which he did not adorn. Republicans will rejoice in a "Commission of Inquiry on Royalty" with a Draft for its abolition, and equally in "A Bible Lesson on Monarchy." No extracts could give any adequate idea of these brilliant papers. Of some, such as "Heine on an Illustrious Exile," "Principal Tulloch on Personal Immortality," "Mr. Kingsley's Convertites," and "The Established Church," I only mention the names. They must be read to be appreciated, and they have only to be read to be enjoyed. The volume is prefaced by an introduction by Mr. Foote, and is excellently printed and beautifully bound. To the printers and publishers it is a credit, to the Freethought cause it is a most notable acquisition; and it will be a treasure to all who are fortunate enough to possess a copy.

J. M. WHEELER.

THE parsons of the present day decline to discuss the question of what became of the body of Moses when the Devil and the archangel Michael had a contest over it. Perhaps they feel it does not concern them in the least, since no angel is likely to interfere to save their carcasses from Satan's clutches.



THE NOAH FAMILY.

NOAH'S FAMILY; OR, BIBLE EVOLUTION.

THIS week we give a sketch—if we were only inspired we might say it was a photograph—of Noah and his wife and their interesting but somewhat variegated progeny, Shem, Ham and Japhet. The sketch is evidently supposed to be taken during the 120 years (Gen. vi., 3) “while the ark was a preparing” and before the three newly-married (for they had no children) hundred-year-old juveniles (compare Gen. v., 32, and vi., 6, 7) entered into the ark with their six-hundred-year-old father. Noah’s grandfather Methuselah died the same year—perhaps abandoned by Noah to his fate—at the early age of nine hundred and sixty-nine years (Gen. v., 27); but according to the Septuagint version of the Bible he must have been alive fourteen years after he had perished in the Flood.

If the Bible be true, all mankind without exception are descended from the three sons of Noah. When God drowned the world with a flood which covered the loftiest mountains, only Noah and his wife, and their three sons and their wives were preserved (Gen. vii., 23; ix., 18, 19; Acts xvii., 24, 26; 1 Peter iii., 20). It is popularly supposed, and with some foundation, that the Bible teaches that Japheth (ordinarily spelled *Japhet*) was the father of the European or Caucasian races, Ham of the Negroes, and Shem of the Semitic and Chinese families. Hence we have represented the sons of Noah as types of the races alleged to be descended from them.

Christians, of course, will object to our sketch, as they usually do to all satire, however mild and merited, and to all criticism except such as ends in hearty praise of Christianity. But how will they explain away the difficulty of accounting for the origin of the various races of mankind in the comparatively brief period at their command? At the most they can only spread over a very limited number of generations the difficulty which we have concentrated into one. The change must have been a rapid one. The Bible only allows 5,888 years since the Creation. It makes 1,656 years elapse before the Flood; and at least 3,300 years ago the Negroes and other sub-species of men were strongly marked as distinct races. This at the very utmost leaves an interval of about 900 years, or thirty generations, in which Negroes, Jews, Chinese, Egyptians, Caucasians, etc., evolved from a common Noachian parentage. If, indeed, Noah’s sons resembled their father in not having children till after they were 500 years of age (Gen. v., 32), there would only be time for two generations. Is it pro-

bable, is it in accordance with experience, that evolution—in numerous directions at once, too—should have gone on as swiftly as this? Modern science is thoroughly hostile to such a supposition. Transformation of species or of varieties in nature requires long periods of time before fixity of type is acquired, through atavism, or the tendency to revert to the original type, being weeded out.

But an impartial study of the monuments of ancient Egypt breaks down even this supposition of an interval of 900 years between the Flood and the evolution of the Egyptians, Negroes, Nubians and Asiatics whose forms the Egyptologist finds depicted as strikingly and as accurately as if they were sketches in the *Graphic* or the *Illustrated London News* of the living races of to-day. The Egyptian fellah was an exact antetype of the present fellah 5,000 to 6,000 years ago, *i.e.*, one or two thousand years previously to *b.c.* 2,348, the date assigned to the alleged deluge.

But why should the Christian trouble about an explanation according to natural law? Miracle—the confusion of tongues at Babel—accounts for the variety of languages on the earth. Why should not miracle equally account for the variety of races? Whether the miracles took place simultaneously or not, the Christian does not know, but the silence of the Bible on the matter should be strong negative evidence. Hottentots, Fijians, Esquimaux, Red Indians, Malayans, Australian aborigines, etc., may have been formed at Babel, while the main varieties of the human race originated with Noah’s sons. At what point or points, however, God worked miraculously and broke through his ordinary law of heredity, we must leave Christian investigators to determine.

In confirmation of the idea that Ham was a born negro, we may mention that his name signifies heat or black. Perhaps we ought to have depicted Noah himself as a negro, or with a parti-colored face in squares or patches like a chess-board; but as the Bible gives no hint upon the matter, we naturally follow the popular notion, which regards the white race as the original stock and the black race as a subsequent offshoot. For aught the Bible says upon the matter, Adam and Eve may have been negroes. As, however, the word Adam signifies red earth, the Red Indians might fairly claim to be the representatives of the original stock made by God in his own image. In this case the white and black and yellow and brown races would alike be offshoots.

Some may suggest that Noah was white and his wife black, and his sons’ wives of various races. This would

apparently give greater scope for variation. The suggestion is wild and utterly improbable. And it would still leave the Christian the task of explaining the evolution of these races in the 1,656 years between the Creation and the Flood. As, according to the ages of the antediluvian patriarchs given in the Bible, human life was about ten times as long as it now is, this period would only give a small number of generations (ten according to the biblical genealogy) between Adam and Noah in which the change was effected. Such rapidity is incredible, and it is of little use to call in miracle, since this is still more incredible to duly instructed minds. The whole narrative thus stands condemned as history, though picturesque as myth.

Christians piously believe in the evolution of the various races of mankind from one original type during some portion of the orthodox 6,000 years, but they indignantly scout the Darwinian idea of a much slower but long-continued process,

of evolution as absurd or impossible. Nature or God, they hold, has carried on a comparatively rapid development during 6,000 years, but to suppose that Nature or God has carried on a far less rapid development for six hundred thousand, or six million, or sixty million years, is contrary to common sense. So ridiculous are some of the Christian criticisms, that we remember reading a long newspaper review in which the pious writer utterly demolished Darwinism as he thought by showing that it involved the incredibly absurd assumption of the evolution of white and black races in the comparatively short period since the creation of the world. If the reviewer proved anything besides his own incompetence, it was the untruthfulness of the biblical narrative. The poor fellow honestly thought he had given the death-blow to the doctrine of Evolution. His position is typical of that occupied by defenders of the Bible in general.

W. P. BALL.

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