

# THE FREETHINKER

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.  
Sub-Editor—J. M. WHEELER.

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## J. C.'s SUMMER DRINK.

*In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.—JOHN VII., 37.*

## CHRIST AND THE PIGS.

WERE a decently educated and fairly thoughtful man to hear for the first time that God came on earth and proved his divinity by transferring devils from men to pigs, it is safe to say that he would, according to his turn of mind or his momentary mood, laugh the story to scorn or denounce it as a monstrous blasphemy. Yet such a tale is devoutly believed, or quietly unquestioned, because it occurs in a book which people are trained from infancy to reverence as the Word of God. Let anyone, however, read it in a scientific spirit, and he will see that it throws a flood of light on the mental condition of those among whom Christianity originated. The belief in demoniacal possession was universal in that age, and during the following three centuries it played a conspicuous part in the lunacies of the Christian Fathers. From the conversion of Constantine the imperial law decreed the most frightful punishment for magicians, and from that time till the decline of the witch-mania, that is for a period of thirteen hundred years, it was taught by the Churches and believed by the people that devils entered the bodies of men and used them for diabolical purposes. Exorcism was a regular profession, and

when the devils would not be expelled from their human quarters the bodies they occupied were drowned, strangled, or burned, so that ecclesiastical evictions were a terrible business indeed.

But science has given the *coup de grâce* to this superstition. When people are mad, hysterical, or daft, we no longer call in the priest to cast out their devils. We call in the skilful doctor who prescribes proper treatment, who regards the derangement as physical, and applies physical instead of spiritual remedies. There are hundreds of persons in our lunatic asylums who would have been legally murdered as possessed by devils two or three centuries ago.

So far indeed has science disposed of demonology that the clergy say as little as possible about the superstition, though it is clearly taught in the Bible; and when a sceptic mentions the subject of the Galilean swine they "look twenty ways for Sunday." It is like talking about rope in a family that had an ancestor hung.

Archdeacon Lefroy, of Liverpool, is however less cautious or less fastidious than his brethren. He has just been preaching a sermon in which he uses the pig story to point a moral; but he honestly allows that "the Gospel distinctly admits the reality in men of demoniacal possession." Jesus Christ's performance, says the Archdeacon, was "a very wonderful miracle which has many sides to it." We agree with him on this point, yet we repudiate his far-



fetches fancies about the "typical meaning" of the miracle. Such exegesis is simply ridiculous. There is not a mystical suggestion in the whole story, which is told in downright, matter-of-fact language, as might be expected when the writer and the reader believed in demonology as firmly as they believed in the rising and setting of the sun. Nor can we follow the Archdeacon in his asinine references to Buddhists and Mohammedans, who have some obscure species of devils driven out of them by Christian missionaries, and afterwards sit clothed and in their right minds. The fact is Christianity makes no converts worth speaking of among Buddhists and Mohammedans, nor does it offer them a morality superior to their own; while in the Dark Continent the missionary enterprise is such a tragical farce that Joseph Thomson, the famous Christian traveller, is forced to declare that "for every African who is influenced for good by Christianity, a thousand are driven into deeper degradation by the gin trade." No, no, Archdeacon Lefroy; the less you talk about driving devils out of the heathen the better, for you send them more devils than you ever expel.

But *revenons à nos moutons*, or rather our pigs. Archdeacon Lefroy says that when the men of Galilee heard of Christ's miracle they "were not so much in a state of exasperation at the loss of their property as they were in a state of horror at what might yet occur if Jesus remained." Well, what immorality was there in such a frame of mind? It is all very well for Archdeacon Lefroy to stand up for his Savior, but he might have sung a different tune if he had been a Galilean pork-butcher. Jesus was simply invited to move on. Such wholesale destruction of pigs threatened to annihilate the pork trade of the district. Jesus had a perfect right to work miracles, but he should have performed on his own property. Besides, it was a wanton destruction of good meat, and thousands of poor men were probably done out of a rasher.

Archdeacon Lefroy forgets all about the poor pigs. "Doth God care for oxen?" asks Paul, and Archdeacon Lefroy says by implication "Doth God care for swine?" But why not? Are they of less value than sparrows? If the story be true, Jesus did the possessed men a good turn, but he was rather rough on the pigs. Had they grunted in the middle of his speech, or what had they done to incur such a punishment? Why did he not send the devils home to Hell at once? But the whole story is puerile in the extreme. Its science and its morality are just on a par. Both may suit the knowledge and character of Archdeacon Lefroy, but they are distasteful to those whose heads are not addled, nor their hearts corrupted, by a silly superstition.

G. W. FOOTE.

### THE GOLDEN RULE.

CHRISTIANS boast of the so-called "Golden Rule" as the practical summing up of sound morality and of Christianity, and they ignorantly but confidently attribute the origin of the saying to Christ as if it had never been known before. It is not however the non-originality of the injunction that I am about to expose, but its mischievousness if really adopted as the standard of conduct.

The command given by Christ runs thus: "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets" (Matt. vii., 12). In Luke the command is given thus: "As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise" (Luke vi., 31). The command is more commonly expressed thus: "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you."

Let us examine the absurdities that would arise from obedience to this famous Golden Rule, of which Christians are so proud in theory and so neglectful in practice. Walking along the street I see a watch in a jeweller's shop and feel a wish that he should give it to me. As I must do unto him all things whatsoever I would that he should do unto me, I walk into the shop and straightforward hand him over my own watch as a free gift. Presently, seeing a pretty girl and wishing she would kiss me, I immediately proceed to obey the law and the prophets and do as I would be done unto, with the result probably that someone knocks me down, or I get locked up and fined and reprimanded

for my obedience to the supreme maxim of Christian conduct. Perhaps some over-acute Christian will suggest that the command only says that I am to do unto *men* as I would be done by, but his suggested limitation of the Golden Rule to the male sex can only be put forward as a piece of frivolity. Christians will doubtless say that the examples I am giving are also specimens of frivolity—which is an easy method of answering an opponent who exposes the absurdities of their doctrines. For these absurdities flow naturally and directly from their premisses. I am not responsible for them, but the Golden Rule *is*, and if the frivolity or absurdity tells against anything it is against the Golden Rule itself.

The two examples I have given can be multiplied a thousand-fold in all departments of human life. Property of all kinds must be parted with if we wish to obtain such property; and we must pay away money because we are in want of it. Love will rest upon a very peculiar and undesirable footing. War must be decided by letting the enemy win if we wish to win ourselves. In all forms of competition we must keep in the background just in proportion as we desire to be in the foreground. We must let others be first if we wish to be first ourselves, and we must do our work badly in order to let others beat us, because we wish to surpass them. We must praise men, not because they deserve it, but simply because we wish to be praised ourselves. We must feed other people as the substitute for satisfying our own hunger. Such a curious reversal of the natural and rightful order of things would be intolerably absurd.

It would also be intolerably mischievous. For we could not arrest or punish criminals, because we should not like to be arrested or punished if we were in their place. The tax-collector could collect no money, because he would have to give whenever he wanted to receive. Under such circumstances government and society would fall to pieces. Evidently it would be madness to obey the divine rule. Only while we half obey it and half defy it is the rule of any practical use. It cannot be taken as the authoritative standard it pretends to be, but only as a guiding suggestion which must always be strictly subject to far more important considerations. It has to be deposed and reduced to its rightful position. Like fire and steam, it may be a good servant, although it would prove a frightfully bad master. It represents a transitional stage of moral evolution, and its imperfections are seen in proportion as moral progress gives men the self-controlling power to obey its sweeping reversal of egoistic impulses which are far more necessary and healthful than the altruistic conduct which is nominally supposed to override them.

The result would not even be altruistic in all cases. A despairing man who wished that other people would shoot him would have to shoot *them*. The penitent monk who wished to be flagellated would have to scourge others. We should have to cut the barber's hair whenever we wished him to cut ours. So that this Golden Rule is worse than the universal benevolence of some of the kindred maxims of Christianity.

The true ruling principle of conduct to others is, Be just, reasonable, considerate. This (or something of this kind) is the standard which people unconsciously adopt while giving all the credit to a Golden Rule which they scout as frivolity or madness immediately it conflicts with the less obtrusive but really decisive standard—a grand and authoritative standard, which is too much ignored because it is not so congenial to religious ideas and popular emotion. Christ, in his Sermon on the Mount, says nothing of justice, the supreme virtue of all. His beatitudes are for the merciful, the poor-spirited, the meek. He would have the just and the unjust treated alike, just as his Father sends rain and sunshine upon them alike. The context to his Golden Rule (Luke vi., 27-37) shows this most clearly. The Golden Rule is there given as a sort of summary of such rules as "Bless them that curse you," "Turn the other cheek also," and "Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again." So that Christ evidently intended the Golden Rule to be understood in a sense which would now be regarded as madness.

The Golden Rule is faulty in another respect. As soon as we try to practice it faithfully and accurately we find that the injunction puzzles us by giving us several conflicting meanings to choose from. Are we to (1) do as we wish



others to do to us ; or (2) are we to do what others wish us to do to them ; or (3) are we to do to others as we should wish to be done to if we were in their place? Are we to follow our own ideas or the ideas of the people to be benefitted? These ideas will often differ widely. Is the teetotaller, for instance, to give drink to a man because if he were in that man's place he would wish to have drink given to him ; or is he to enforce a tyrannical prohibition law, because as a teetotaller he would wish others to serve him so? Is the Freethinker to exclude Christians from churches because he might wish to be excluded himself, or is he to compel people to attend church because he might desire this if he were a Christian. A little reflection will show that whichever of the three meanings is adopted the Golden Rule teaches gross tyranny or absurd folly.

W. P. BALL.

## ACID DROPS.

THE Practical Holiness Convention held its thirteenth annual meeting at Keswick, in the midst of the beautiful lake district of Cumberland. Practical holiness thus appears to be very much of the nature of a summer picnic. Over three thousand saints attended from all parts of the world to enjoy the scenery and the "powerful addresses" of various well-known speakers.

HOLINESS, we are told, is a conformity to the nature and will of God. Do the holy places conform most to the nature and will of God? If so the seekers after holiness should go to places like Jerusalem, where it is indigenous. If, however, holiness means a pleasant outing in the hot weather, we think it is a pity that people don't get a little more of it. The three thousand saints might even be self-denying enough to part with a little of it to those who are poorer than themselves, and stand more in need of it. Which reminds us that the Freethinkers' Practical Holiness Convention for children starts to Epping Forest in vans on the 14th. All Freethinkers who wish to encourage this highly desirable form of holiness should send a subscription in aid.

MR. SPURGEON was unable to conduct the services at the Tabernacle the other Sunday through a fresh attack of gout. In the conflict of gout *versus* prayer, gout appears to be victor pretty often. God really ought to keep his promises in this case, for who knows how many souls are lost for lack of Spurgeon's rousing doses of salvation on such occasions?

"STEEPLE-JACKS" have been at work on St. Bride's Church, Fleet Street. They are putting up a fresh lightning conductor, the old one having been struck by the electric fluid. In 1764 God allowed the church to be so damaged by lightning that 85 feet of the steeple had to be taken off. It was again struck in 1803. As God doesn't protect his churches his more intelligent servants are now forced to put up metal conductors as a substitute.

THE Rev. A. Wagentreiber, curate of Tunbridge Wells, and his affianced, Miss Emily Brewerton, were overtaken by the tide and both drowned at Conway while gathering shells. If he had only had faith as a grain of mustard seed the curate might have stopped the rising waves by his word of command. But somehow the Bible fails when put to any practical test.

THE Melbourne police have received orders to see that the churches do not overcrowd. They never received a smaller order. But, as the *Liberator* says, it's the only way of getting the poor policemen to go church.

THE *South Wales Daily News*, in a leader, says: "Surely Christianity, as represented by the Christian Government of England, must often have been cursed by thousands upon thousands in heathen lands for the misery and ruin which it has mercilessly heaped upon them."

DR. PARKER says "We cannot honor one another until we truly fear and love the living God." What rubbish these ministers will talk. A vegetarian might as well say we cannot honor one another until we are all genuine vegetarians. Would Dr. Parker have the impudence to say that the ancient Romans never honored each other, and that Chinese sons never honor their fathers and mothers? It is sheer arrogance to assert that only Theists can honor each other. If the right name indeed were bestowed on this kind of assertion, we fear that Dr. Parker and his like would have to be found guilty of impudent lying, or else of insane ignorance.

A WELSH deacon is trying to put down a village cricket club. The rules of this club are so far religious that they actually prohibit playing during the hours of the week-day services. But the deacon is not content. The *wicket* pleasure must be totally abolished. A member of the club writes to the *Christian Commonwealth* to know what he is to do. He is practically advised in those sacred columns to play six nights a week in spite of a dozen surly deacons, if he thinks proper. So there will probably

be war in that Christian camp. But what is to become of Christianity if men and boys are thus taught to rebel against their superiors in Christ?

THE Church Tower of Warslow Church has been burnt down, and a loss of about £400 will fall on the Lancashire Office. This is another proof of how much Christians trust in the Lord. His credit is not so good by £400 as that of the Lancashire Fire Office.

A DEPUTATION of sky-pilots, representing the Australian Ministers' Union, waited on the Premier of New South Wales to urge him to set the law in motion against the Sunday lectures in Sydney. Sir Henry Parkes replied that it was not a very easy thing for the Government to interfere with. He asked whether these places were largely attended, and received for answer, "Crowded to the door." The Premier then inquired, "How is it that these places are crowded with people who pay sums of money to go there when they can go to churches without paying anything?" The ministers replied there were only three of these places in Sydney, whilst there are hundreds of churches. Sir Henry Parkes eventually promised these Sunday monopolists that he would look into the law of the matter.

THE Government has since given notice to the lessees of theatres that if they let them on Sunday they will lose their licences. It is understood that this action has been taken in revenge for the attitude displayed by the Freethought party in Australia towards the Jubilee movement. Evidently our friends at the antipodes must be up and doing. We have no fear that they will be crushed, but let them remember that the more they bend their backs the more they will have to bear.

HE who wants to enjoy the comforts of religion as derived through the medium of the Bible, must cheerfully and thoroughly submit himself to the absolute, divine authority of that book. If he doubts its authority, or cavils with it, he will not be in a condition of mind to receive its comforts. Faith, simple faith, is an indispensable condition on his part.—*Independent*.

ALSO, if a quadruped would enjoy the comfort of shavings as a diet, he must wear green spectacles and cheerfully submit himself to the belief that he is eating grass. It will at once be seen that, as in the other instance, faith, simple faith, is an indispensable condition on his part.

THERE is a blind man who makes his living by reading a finger-Bible at the Surrey side of one of the bridges. One day a gentleman connected with the religious press happened to be standing beside him, a fact of which the blind man was not aware. Scarcely any people were passing, and none of them dropped anything into the hat. The blind man read aloud page after page until he came to the passage beginning, "Then the Lord said unto Moses." Here he paused for encouragement, which was not forthcoming, and then added, in an undertone of disgust—"This is d—d slow."

A SUNDAY or two ago, a Welsh pastor found himself in a predicament, owing to a curious division among the worshippers. One section desired him to use the form of prayer for rain, while another section objected on the ground that their hay was mown but not stacked.

MR. S. SMITH, one of the Social Purity people, has called the attention of the House of Commons to the indecent prints and books, which, he says, are actually exhibited for sale side by side with the Bible! Well, why not? If Mr. Smith will only read the Bible, he will find that it merits his first attention on the score of obscenity; for while other dirty books are sold by the dozen to grown-up people, the Bible is actually thrust by the million into the hands of children, who are taught that its poison is the real balm of Gilead.

IN a London City missionary's experiences, given in the *Christian Herald*, the principal event is that he was "most savagely attacked by infuriated Irish papists," and had to fly for his life. But papists are Christians, so that the first work of a missionary ought to be to Christianise the Christians. This is apparently a hopeless task.

THE Rev. Isaac Wodhams is helping the Primrose League to boycott a widow at Brackley who earns her livelihood by selling sweets. Mrs. Sealey's offence is that she has declined to join the Brackley Habitation of the League. The reverend boycotter in Christ is head-master of Magdalen College School, and he has forbidden the pupils to deal with the old lady. As they were among her best customers this prohibition is a severe blow. Mrs. Sealey has spoken to the clergy of the parish, but of course to no purpose. If this boycotting had taken place in Ireland the clergy and the Primrose League would have been among the first to denounce it.

DISASTROUS floods have swept through parts of the United States. In Augusta, Georgia, and its vicinity, property to the amount of one-and-a-half million dollars has been destroyed. The sufferers are praising God from whom all blessings flow.



AT Peshawur the few Christians present can praise God for causing three hundred deaths by cholera during July. In Italy the epidemic is increasing. Fifteen to twenty deaths from cholera are recorded daily at Catania. The monasteries are also suffering as well as the prisons. God doesn't seem to protect his monks any more than he does his criminals.

THE *Church Times* publishes a long poem entitled "Sons of Jesus," written especially for the Church of England Working Men's Society. We always understood that Jesus was a bachelor.

SAYS the *Memphis Avalanche*: "When one finds a paper called the *Christian at Work* says that 'a Yankee has just taught ducks to swim in hot water with such success that they lay boiled eggs,' it is about time for the editors of wild Western secular papers to lead in prayer from the amen corner."

THE Rev. W. H. Beever, M.A., rector of Llandyisil, Montgomeryshire, fell down on the platform of the railway station at Great Marlow and expired on the spot. He had been running to catch the train. We recommend the numerous cases of sudden death among Christians to the attention of the pious Mr. Kettle, who last Sunday was rushing about Victoria Park in a most excited state, proclaiming to all listeners that God had struck down an infidel for his unbelief.

THE *North Bucks Flying Post and Aylesbury Express*, writing upon the judges as the great paid, says: "The scandalous trials by Mr. Justice North of Foote for blasphemy, by Mr. Justice Manisty of the case of Adams against the Lord Chief Justice, ought to prevent those judges from ever trying another case."

JUDGE NORTH, for obvious reasons, was removed from the criminal to the Chancery Courts shortly after the trial of Mr. Foote. His decisions in the Chancery Courts are, however, little more satisfactory, especially where a chance for his bigotry comes in play. He recently decided that money belonging to the Seventh Day Baptists, left for building a chapel for that body, might be handed over to some body of ordinary Baptists, reserving to Sabbatarians the right to use it on Saturday. So that money left by the keepers of the Lord's Day on the day which he appointed, is to go—we suppose because there are so few of them—to the concurrent endowment of a sect from whom they seceded. This may form a very good precedent for dealing with church property some day.

A CORRESPONDENT in a Christian contemporary protests against the irreverent quotations of Scripture in parliament and at political meetings. It is evidently very painful to his religious feelings to hear Scriptural phraseology and the cant of the turf mixed up together in a rattling political speech. If Mr. Kenny's bill passes in its unimproved state the offenders can be prosecuted. Mr. H. W. Lawson, M.P., Lord Salisbury, Sir William Harcourt, and Mr. Labouchere are among the culprits mentioned. Salisbury's crime was that he described the anti-Russian attitude of Austria as "tidings of great joy"—whereupon the changes were rung upon the "sacred words" by the newspaper writers. Harcourt has disfigured a "noble passage" in Isaiah in order to obtain roars of laughter. Labouchere is described as "likewise" a "great offender in this direction." But times are changing. The Bible is ceasing to be a sacred oracle. Politicians are actually doing the work of Freethinkers, in ridiculing and parodying the national fetish.

THE churchwardens of St. Jude's, Southsea, have stuck up on their church doors a proclamation against "the indecent behavior of young people frequenting this church," which notice has much irritated a portion of the congregation.

A MEMBER of the Salvation Army at Ramsgate, who is suffering from a somewhat larger dose of religious mania than usual, edified the people by rushing through the streets of that seaside resort with hardly anything on. He was finally captured in a state of complete nudity at Margate. His name is Glanville, and he is the proprietor of a shop at Ramsgate. Perhaps Mr. Glanville had been reading in his Bible how the prophet Isaiah went about naked for three years. The Holy Spirit, however, should be more careful nowadays in inspiring freaks of this kind.

ACCORDING to a paragraph in the *Daily Chronicle*, a mission preacher connected with the Salvation Army at Newport, Monmouthshire, has eloped with the young lady who used to lead the musical portions of the service. The preacher leaves a wife and family behind him. His companion is a young lady of good position in the town. As they have plenty of religion, God will forgive them, and morality is of no consequence. Seduction and desertion of wife and children are nothing in comparison with the acts of the man after God's own heart, whose abundant faith amply atoned for all his pleasant sins and convenient crimes.

THE trial of the Rev. F. M. Todd, of Mannassas, Virginia, by the Washington presbytery on a charge of having been seen in the woods in a ministerial situation with a female member of the congregation, ended on the 8th in a verdict of not proven.

THE *Durham Chronicle* (July 29) reports the case of Robert

Nicholson, who was charged with indecently assaulting Mary Ann Mangham, a girl under sixteen. The evidence given in court is far too dirty for our columns, and we only refer to the case because the defendant is a Primitive Methodist class-leader. In the eyes of sensible and honest men this fact only adds to the heinousness of his offence, but the pious magistrates took a different view. They said that, owing to his good character, they would not send him to prison, but fine him three pounds. Primitive Methodist class-leaders now know the tariff for such indulgences in the Chester-le-Street district.

CHARLES WALL was tried at Derby on July 28, before Mr. Justice Hawkins, on a charge of feloniously assaulting Eliza Hickinbotham, a girl of fifteen. The prisoner, who was found guilty, submitted to the judge a written appeal for mercy, in which he stated that he had spent his time in the cell in praying to God, and added: "I feel sure that my sins are pardoned, and I am determined to live to God's glory and for the welfare of those around me." Judge Hawkins treated this hypocritical rigmarole as it deserved. He told the prisoner he had been guilty of a shameful abuse of friendship, and that there was seldom such a heartless case of treachery and cruelty. Charles Wall has taken twelve months' leisure, diversified with hard labor, in which to "pray without ceasing."

A POOR colored ex-minister of Rockport, Indiana, was recently so crazed by the threats of Sister Hatfield to leave him and go back to her husband that he sent his colored soul and that of his neighbor's wife to the bad place. O woman (white or black), how much hast thou to account for! How many ministers dost thou lay low!

How the Lord's people are persecuted! Here is the Rev. John Hammond, of Old Elvet, Durham, accused of stealing a watch and chain; and, as though this was not enough, he is accused of having committed the robbery from a house of ill-fame which he visited at Middlesbrough, doubtless with a view to the reformation and salvation of the inhabitants. His counsel contended that he suffered from a species of madness which made him at times not answerable for his actions. He was admitted to bail in a surety of £100, and it is speculated whether the species of madness from which he suffers may prevent him answering to his bail when called.

THE Rev. John Dickson, the Sabbatarian minister of St. Ninian's Free Church, who recently inveighed against Sunday sailing, has had a cabman fined for driving past his church during the hours of divine service. We can understand ministers wanting a monopoly of Sunday business, but cannot see why magistrates should countenance their arrogance. The Leith magistrates must be as contemptible as the Rev. John Dickson.

THE Rev. J. F. Brindle, of St. Anne's-on-the-Sea, sent a thousand pounds' worth of railway scrip to a stockbroker to raise money upon to redeem the reverend speculator's liabilities on the purchase of large quantities of stocks and shares. The railway scrip however was his daughter's property. This young lady says the scrip was sent without her consent, and accused the stockbroker of obtaining the scrip by fraud. Why didn't she bring the charge against her pious father? He was evidently the culprit if anyone was. The stockbroker brought an action for libel, and gained a verdict, the judge stating that there was not a tittle of foundation for the outrageous libel which had been published concerning him.

WALTER JENKINS, who has undergone two years' imprisonment out of the fifteen to which he was sentenced, now confesses he shot his master. He says he committed the crime through mental derangement while he was preparing to devote his life to missionary work.

In an article on "Scepticism and Morality" the *Rock* maintains that merely secular morality, if it can exist at all, must be altogether inferior to theistic morality because its standard of conduct, being only a matter of opinion, is liable to constant fluctuation. But so is theistic morality. The morality of the Pentateuch is very different from the morality of Isaiah and the New Testament, and the morality taught by Christ is very different from the morality upheld by Christian churches to-day. Religion has to conform itself to popular changes of moral feeling, just as the Secular standard would have to do. The great difference is that religion lags behind the age and is a most formidable impediment to progress. The asserted "animalism" of the sceptic is nothing compared with the "animalism" of the polygamists, slave-owners and murderers who found free permission for their crimes and vices under the Old Testament standard of perfect morality.

WHEN the *Rock* says that "apart from Christian morality, it is and always has been, merely a matter of opinion whether a man should have one wife or more," it makes a preposterous claim for Christianity which it cannot substantiate. There is no text in the Bible abolishing polygamy, except, perhaps, in the solitary case of bishops. Monogamy is an instance of the purely secular formation of the moral standard. Theism did not teach it till forced to do so by the growth of moral opinion.



## SPECIAL NOTICE.

Sunday, Aug. 7, at 11, Old Pimlico Pier (open air); at 7.30, Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, London, E.C., "Religion: Will it live or die?"

Thursday, August 11, Park Town Hall, Queen's Road, Battersea, at 8, "Is Christianity True?"

AUGUST 14, Bethnal Green Branch (morning), Hall of Science (evening); 28, Edinburgh.

SEPT. 4, Glasgow; 11, Manchester.

OCT. 2, 9, and 30 London Hall of Science.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct 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. 3d.; 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. Schweizer, G. Randell, R. Fox.

H. COURTNEY.—The account of the Tennessee negro funeral appeared in several English papers, the *Echo* for one. Only the comments in the paragraph were ours. Of course the London Open-Air Lecture Committee is not antagonistic to the Propagandist Committee. The latter is appointed by the Executive of the N. S. S., and its duties are national and supplementary. The London Branches ought not to look to the National Executive to do their work or guide their policy. Unfortunately there has been too much of this in the past, and the result is a want of cohesion and development in the metropolis. Glad to hear the *Freethinker* causes "quite a sensation" in your workshop.

ADMIRER.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

W. BRIGGS, 244 Commercial Road, E., sells this journal and other secular publications.

R. QUINN.—Thanks. Jokes and cuttings are always welcome. Our readers cannot send us too many.

D.—Cutting received with thanks. Mr. Foote will be happy to pay Birmingham another visit, but he would like to lecture in a less out-of-the-way place than Baskerville Hall.

E. T. GARNER.—The man Poulson is an unscrupulous liar. His statement that Robert Taylor, the Devil's chaplain, recanted before his death, is a pure—or rather impure—invention. The only fact known about the matter is that Taylor left several manuscripts which his more orthodox wife burnt. Poulson knows perfectly well that there is not a word of truth in his foul talk about Mr. Foote. The *Secularist* he quotes from is dated June, 1876. How on earth could Mr. Foote have deserted his wife *then*, when he was not married till March, 1877? That, of course, is part of the satire. Besides, the very number of the *Secularist* in which that satirical article appears, contains a serious report of what *did* take place at the Leeds Conference; and that report shows that the passages in the article are *ironical*. And mark the cunning of this pious knave. Neither he nor his colleagues dared to palm that ironical passage off as serious at the time it was printed, for copies of the *Secularist* could then be purchased, and the mare's nest would be exposed. No, they wait till the paper has been dead ten years, and copies are unprocurable; and then they practise a deliberate deception on people who know nothing of the actual circumstances of the case. We say *deliberate deception* advisedly, because the fellows have had the truth pointed out to them, yet they go on repeating the falsehood. Poulson is the chief sinner, but we have the names of two others. Henceforth we shall treat them in this journal with the silence of contempt. Still, we advise them not to get too close to us at any outdoor meeting. Hitherto they have carefully been somewhere else when we have been lecturing, and we advise them to be always as prudent.

H. E. BROMLEY.—Dr. Andrew Wilson sometimes lectures in London at South Place Chapel or at St. George's Hall. We don't know what he would call himself, but he is very advanced in religious matters.

T. NELSON.—If you are a Christian, you are a very funny one. Your idea that Christians should buy up all copies of this journal, and prevent Freethinkers from getting any, deserves to be patented. When you found the shutters up at 28 Stonecutter Street, it must have been after business hours. Pray away if it does you any good; it does us no harm.

J. H. WHITHAM.—We quite agree with you. Real progress is impossible without Freethought. While people are slaves to superstition they will be deluded, plundered, and oppressed either openly or in disguise.

J. FRANCIS.—You will find a full account of fraudulent Christian documents in the chapter on "Pious Forgeries" in the first volume of *Crimes of Christianity*, which we have just published.

X.—We regret that you and your friends misread the paragraph. The half dozen persons who followed Mr. Foote for a few yards after the Columbia Road lecture, and dropped off because "they perhaps remembered the public-houses were open," were of course howling Christians. Read the paragraph again, and you will see the passage cannot apply to the Freethinkers.

W. N. asks "Where is the nearest point to Cheapside at which to obtain the *Freethinker*?" Where I reside, at Bayswater, I do not think it penetrates at all." We think our correspondent is mistaken. Perhaps some other correspondent will enlighten him. W. N. adds that there was a large Freethought meeting last Sunday at Battersea Park gates, while the Christian Evidence rostrum was surrounded by a magnificent audience of a dozen, half of whom were children.

BUSY BEE.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

F. C. PERCY.—Smith's railway book-stalls do not supply the *Freethinker*. They would rather sell smutty French novels. We do not know of any friendly newsagent in Bournemouth. We fear you will have to subscribe through Mr. Forder, and have this journal sent by post. For terms see above.

C. WARD.—Always pleased to receive your cuttings.

A. ANDRADE.—Your last stanza is very immelodious, though the idea is excellent. Pleased to hear that you are still laboring for the good old cause. Mr. Foote would be happy to lecture in Hyde Park again, but at present he cannot see his way to paying any of the open-air stations a second visit. It is interesting to learn that your copy of this journal is eagerly perused by orthodox friends.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Western Figaro—North Bucks Flying Post and Aylesbury Express—Sydney Globe—Sydney Evening News—Church Reformer—Jus—Cambria Daily Leader—Neues Freireligioses Sonntags-Blatt—Hope—Kensington News—Portsmouth Evening News—Umpire—Edinburgh Evening News—La Semaine Anticléricale—Porcupine—Cheltenham Mercury—Bristol Mercury—Ironclad Age—Truthseeker—Sunday Chronicle—Hereford Times Supplement.

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday, if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

## SUGAR PLUMS.

A BIG meeting awaited Mr. Foote's arrival at Camberwell Green last Sunday morning, and although the traffic was impeded the police did not interfere. On the right of the big Freethought meeting there was a small band of noisy, hymn-singing Salvationists; on the left was Mr. Tarry bawling himself hoarse, and shouting the names of Bradlaugh, Foote, Besant, *ad nauseam*. Further on was a Socialist orator discoursing to half-a-dozen or so. In the evening Mr. Foote lectured to what, considering the weather and the holiday, was a capital audience.

At the London Hall of Science this evening (Aug. 7) Mr. Foote lectures on "Religion: will it Live or Die?" The lecture will have special reference to M. Guyau's important new work on *L'Irreligion de la Future*.

MR. ROBERT FORDER, the energetic Secretary of the N. S. S., lectures in Belfast to-day (Aug. 7) at the Abercorn Hall. Freethinkers in the district should not miss the opportunity of hearing him.

THE Freethought University at the town of Liberal, Missouri, has held its first anniversary. The proceedings, which were presided over by Mr. G. H. Walser, founder of the town and university, occupied every evening from June 28th to July 2nd, and appear to have given the utmost satisfaction to all concerned.

READERS abroad may be reminded that the International Freethought Congress will be held in the Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, London, E.C., on Saturday, Sept. 10, Sunday, Sept. 11 and Monday, Sept. 12. We hope there will be a large attendance from all nations who will be received not as foreigners but friends.

JOHN GRANGE, jun., of Farsley, near Leeds, has issued a leaflet he calls *Meditations on the Religious Jubilee*. Mr. Grange no doubt utters the feelings of many in expressing his disgust at the toadyism and hypocrisy connected with the celebration of the Jubilee.

FROM the latest of the unpublished letters of Thackeray, given in the August number of *Scribner*, we obtain a glimpse of the great novelist's religious views. Writing to a lady correspondent, Thackeray says: "I don't know about the Unseen World; the use of the seen world is the right thing I'm sure. It is just as much God's world and creation as the Kingdom of Heaven with all the angels. I'll admire, if I can, the wing of a cock-sparrow as much as the pinion of an archangel; and adore God the Father of the earth, first; waiting for the completion of my senses, and the fulfilment of his intentions towards me afterwards, when this scene closes in." From these expressions it would seem that Thackeray held to a sort of Theistic-Agnostic Secularism.

MESSRS FOOTE AND WHEELER have spent enormous labor and care on the volume of *Crimes of Christianity* just published. The footnotes are crowded with references to standard authorities, and we venture to say that this impeachment of "the bloody faith" is unanswerable. If it can be answered, let the Christian Evidence Society attempt the task. That will be far better than spending its income in circulating libels on leading Freethinkers. Still we don't expect the C. E. S. will respond to the challenge. The title of Mr. Engstrom's Society is a misnomer. It is, indeed, high time that somebody advertised for a Christian Evidence lecturer who will lecture on Christian Evidences. Instead of defending their client, these gentry do nothing but insinuate that the counsel for the prosecution has not settled his tailor's bill, as though that had anything to do with the case.

*Holy Moses* will be ready for sale next Thursday. It forms Parts VII. and VIII. of Mr. Foote's *Bible Heroes*.



LAST Sunday the South Shields Branch of the N. S. S. made an excursion to Holywell Dene. After an early tea they had dancing and singing on the Green till half-past seven, to the astonishment of many orthodox spectators, among whom back numbers of the *Freethinker* were distributed.

WHAT the *Sydney Globe* describes as "the first collision on Australian Soil of Imperialistic and Republican opinions," has taken place in New South Wales. Dissatisfied with the result of a meeting at which it was almost unanimously resolved not to celebrate the Jubilee, the lip-loyalists got up a new public meeting which they attempted to pack with tickets issued only to friends. The young Australian party, however, attended in strong force, and groans for the Queen and cries for the Australian Republic were heard. Mr. Jones, the president of the Australian Secular Association, was prepared to move an amendment, but he was thrown from the platform to the floor and hustled out. The police cleared the hall with difficulty. Another meeting was held, packed with Orangemen, gaol warders, sailors, and civil servants. Lord Carrington, the governor, attended, escorted by prize-fighters. The young Australian party, the most active spirits of whom are Freethinkers, claim an emphatic victory, and think a decided step has been made towards their hope of the future—the establishment of the Federated Republican States of Australia.

MR. ALFRED HENRIQUES has been telling his fellow religionists, in the columns of the *Jewish Chronicle*, how difficult it is to uphold the Mosaic authorship of the first books of the Bible, and his paper is supplemented by a letter from "Historicus," who plainly answers the question "If the Jewish laws are not of God, why should we obey them?" with the like question, "If they be not the dictates of reason, why obey them?"

### THE DATES OF THE BIBLE BOOKS.

FOR any accurate knowledge of the development of Jewish religion, or even for the right understanding of much that is in the Bible, it is necessary to have some conception of the chronological order in which the books forming that collection were written.

Most people have got over the foolish belief, so sedulously inculcated by the theologians, that the Bible is one book, all of a piece, and just as it came from the hand of God; but very few are acquainted with the actual results of modern critical scholarship as exhibited on the Continent by Kuenen, Reuss, Graf, Ewald, and Wellhausen; and in our own country, to some extent, by inferior men like Dr. S. Davidson, Bishop Colenso, Dr. Cheyne, and Professor Robertson Smith. A vague but erroneous impression that the oldest books are placed first and the latest last is one that in some minds needs removing.

I propose, then, as briefly as possible, to show what may be considered the general results of modern criticism in regard to the age of the Bible documents. The question of authorship will be put aside, save so far as it affects the date.

Hebrew chronology is by no means the simple thing which it may seem to those who accept with unquestioning reverence the dates printed in the margins of many of our Bibles. God himself quite forgot the important business of dating his letters to mankind, and this matter was settled for us by Archbishop Usher. The ancient Hebrews had no *era*, and the current denotation of time in the earlier records is expressed in the terms of the lives of men. Adam at such an age begat Seth, who at such an age begat Enos, and so on. But as the Samaritan, Septuagint and Hebrew versions differ as to the ages of many characters, this in itself affects the chronology. Even so noteworthy an event as the time of the building of Solomon's temple is uncertain. Our Bibles place the completion and dedication of the temple at B.C. 1004. But Josephus says it was built 143 years and 8 months before the founding of Carthage, which was in 814-13 B.C. So that Solomon's temple must be placed at 957-6 B.C. The Book of Ecclesiastes is dated in our Bible B.C. 977, which is almost certainly 700 years too early. The Book of Leviticus is dated B.C. 1490, which is even more than a thousand years before its time. Job is dated 1520 B.C., but it was certainly later than Solomon. There are no Hebrew coins or inscriptions to aid in settling Bible chronology, and it is only when certain events in God's book synchronize with profane history that we are on sure ground.

It has long been known that in the first books ascribed to Moses two separate writers can be distinguished, known by their respective use of the words translated "God" and "the Lord." While some disputes remain as to the

date and nature of the sources used by these writers, there is a general consensus of agreement that the Jahvist (commencing Gen. ii., 4) is the earliest, that he belonged to Northern Israel, and that his work may be dated about the eighth century B.C. His materials included pre-existing legends of the patriarchs, the book of Jasher, or of heroes, and the book of the Wars of Jahveh. These cannot be dated, but probably consisted of anecdotes and songs transmitted by oral tradition. The mode of citation, especially in Numbers xxi., warrants the belief that the authors stood very far from the events they narrated. The Book of Deuteronomy and the following Book of Joshua can with little doubt be assigned to the period of finding the Book of the Law by Hilkiah (who seems to have been a prototype of Shapira) in the time of Josiah, 630 B.C. Prior to this was the Book of the Covenant and the Decalogue embodied in Exodus. But it is certain that the earliest prophets knew absolutely nothing of the Mosaic law. The like result follows from an examination of the historical and poetic books. Three codes of law are found in the Pentateuch, not only distinct but discrepant. They indicate different conditions of religious thought at different periods. The earliest and shortest code is the Book of the Covenant. It permits private sacrifices, and is silent on the special functions of the Levites. It must be placed at the time of the blending of the Elohist and Jahvist faith in the eighth century. The second code is that of Deuteronomy. Among its objects are the making of Jerusalem a religious centre, with sacrifices only at the Temple. It knows nothing of the Levitical or Priestly Code.

The Priestly Code, which is mainly stated in Leviticus together with Exodus xxv.-xl. (except chaps. xxxii.-xxxiv.) and Numbers i.-x., xv.-xix., xxv., and xxxvi. (with some inconsiderable exceptions), all belongs to the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, and may be dated about 444 B.C. Thus the great bulk of the books ascribed to Moses were written at a time extending from eight hundred to a thousand years after he was buried by Jahveh.

The Book of Joshua is one with the book of the law. Their contents form one whole, and they are the outcome of one and the same literary process. The Book of Jasher has here also been used. In the Book of Judges we come to earlier strata, much appearing on the surface which in the preceding books was only in the subsoil. That the matter is earlier than Joshua may be seen from a comparison of Judges i., 12-15, with Joshua xv., 16-19. The Song of Deborah, the Story of Abimelech, and the Parable of Jotham are probably among the most ancient fragments of the Bible. The religious interpretation of the book corresponds with the prophetic teaching of the eighth century B.C., and it must be assigned to that era. The use of Baal as the title of false deities hardly fits a time earlier than Hosea (see Hos. ii., 16).

The Book of Ruth is probably of about the same date. The duties of the *goel*, upon which the story hinges, are certainly earlier than those of the *levir*, referred to in Deuteronomy xxv., 5-10.

The Books of Samuel, though long after the date of that prophet, contain ancient documents. The account of Saul's visit to the witch of Endor and the history of David's Court, 2 Sam. ix. to 1 Kings ii., are valuable remains of ancient history. The Books of Samuel are less systematically edited than Kings, though there are evident additions and modifications of the sources, and, as in Judges, we sometimes find two accounts of the same event, *e.g.*, the introduction of David to Saul. Its compilation must be referred to the same period as the Books of Kings. This work (for it is essentially one compilation from pre-existing materials mentioned as the Acts of Solomon, chronicles of the Kings of Israel, etc.), terminates with the thirty-seventh year of Jehoiachin's reign. Hence it was probably compiled between 560 and 530 B.C.

The Books of Chronicles together with Ezra and Nehemiah form a separate document. The Chronicles extend from Adam to the end of the exile in Babylon, 536 B.C. But there are marks of much later age, and the work is more edited, and even less trustworthy than Kings, though certain documents are referred to not mentioned in that work. There are, for instance, the genealogies of Iddo (2 Chron. xii., 15), the Book of Jehu concerning Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. xx., 34), the Acts of Uzziah (2 Chron. xxvi., 22), etc. The descent of Zerubbabel, who lived at the return from exile, is traced down six generations (1 Chron. iii., 19-22). We are thus



brought near the close of the Persian Monarchy. The work is, moreover, directly connected with Ezra and Nehemiah, who, in the books put forward under their names, are spoken of, not as contemporaries, but as vanished heroes of the venerable past. Nehemiah also brings the list of high priests on to Jaddua, who, Josephus informs us, officiated when Alexander the Great visited Jerusalem. Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah, then, cannot be earlier than 330 B.C. Spinoza placed the work later than the Maccabees.

J. M. WHEELER.

(To be continued.)

## I WILL ARISE.

HAVING been brought before Pilate on the double charge of blasphemy and sedition, and sentenced to death, Jesus, according to the testimony of the Gospel writers, on a certain day, suffered the full penalty of the law by a lingering and cruel death on the cross.

But though Jesus the man could die, Jesus the God could not. Consequently the divine part of the Jewish carpenter, having been content to remain in the grave to look after the body of the human part of Jesus for three days and three nights, or more correctly speaking, two nights and one day and a half, the divine part said to the human part "I will arise!" and having again imparted the vital spark to the injured body of the Nazarene, when nobody was looking, removed a heavy stone from the door of the sepulchre and came out.

What the human part of Jesus felt when he awoke and found himself in the grave neither the writers of the Gospels nor Jesus himself have left on record. Shakespeare, with a finer imagination than any of the biblical scribes has, made Juliet realise the horror of such a situation. Before taking the poison which is to send her into a trance, she thus argues:

"How if, when I am laid into the tomb,  
I wake before the time that Romeo  
Comes to redeem me? there's a fearful point!  
Shall I not then be stifled in the vault,  
To whose foul mouth no healthsome air breathes in,  
And there die strangled ere my Romeo comes?  
Or, if I live, is it not very like  
The horrible conceit of death and night,  
Together with the terror of the place,  
As in a vault, an ancient receptacle,  
Where, for these many hundred years, the bones  
Of all my buried ancestors are packed;  
Where bloody Tybalt, yet but green in earth,  
Lies festering in the shroud, where, as they say,  
At some hours in the night spirits resort,  
Alack, alack! is it not like that I,  
So early waking—what with loathsome smells,  
And shrieks like mandrakes torn out of the earth  
That living mortals, hearing them, run mad:  
Or, if I awake, shall I not lie distraught,  
Environed with all these hideous fairs?  
And madly play with my forefathers' joints,  
And pluck the mangled Tybalt from his shroud,  
And in this rage with some great kinsman's bone,  
As with a club, dash out my desperate brains?"

It must be remembered that however often the divine part of Jesus had taken refuge in a tomb the human part had never been there before. Yet Jesus did not consider the experience sufficiently novel or startling to say a word about it or give any of his disciples instructions to record anything regarding it.

Each of the Gospel writers affirms that Jesus arose and came out of the tomb, and Paul declares that if he did not, then are Christians of all men the most miserable. The question however must be decided upon the weight of evidence, apart altogether from the consideration of whether it renders the thoughtful among the Christians miserable or otherwise. So we will call up the witnesses and examine the value of their testimony.

Matthew Blank, the first witness examined, declared that he was not present on the occasion, but would nevertheless take his solemn affidavit that Jesus did actually rise from the dead. Also that an earthquake took place about the time of the death of Jesus, and many of the "bodies of the Saints came out of the grave and went into the Holy City and appeared unto many."

Cross examined: He could not give the name of one of the "saints" who came out of the grave. It may have been that they were all "sinners"—but they came out. Nor could he give the name or address of one person to whom any of these resurrected bodies showed themselves. Never thought of asking.

Further examined: The witness testified that Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were first at the grave on the morning of the resurrection. Also that there was another earthquake, and that an angel of the Lord, with a countenance "like lightning," and a raiment "white as snow," came down from heaven, rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. Also that Jesus appeared to his disciples, and finally that priests bribed the soldiers, whose duty it was to watch the grave, to say that while they slept the disciples of Jesus had stolen the body.

Further cross-examined: Was quite sure that an angel came down from heaven. Where else could it come from? Could not describe the body of the angel. Did not think it had one;

in fact had never seen an angel. Believed there were such things—had dreamt about them. Did not know in what language angels spoke—nor where they acquired it—but would swear that the angel said to the woman: "Fear not ye; for I know that ye seek Jesus which was crucified." Was quite sure that Jesus spoke to his disciples, though he could not remember to which. Did not think Thomas was there. Would swear positively that the priests paid the soldiers to say they were asleep. Would admit that it did seem a little strange that sleeping soldiers should know that the disciples had stolen the body. Was not aware that Roman soldiers found asleep at their posts were always punished with death.

The second witness was Mark Dash. Being examined, he declared that three women came down to the grave on the morning of the resurrection. That when they got to the grave the stone was rolled away, and inside the sepulchre they saw a young man in a long white garment. The young man spoke to the women, and told them to "Be not afraid," and that Jesus had risen. Jesus appeared first to Mary, out of whom he cast seven devils; he afterwards appeared unto the eleven disciples, and upbraided them for their unbelief.

Cross-examined: Was sure it was a young man in the sepulchre, and not an angel. If Matthew had said an angel, he was not speaking the truth. There was no earthquake; that he would swear. If there had been he must have felt the shock. He was very nervous. He did not see the bodies of any dead saints walking about. They did not introduce themselves to him. There were no soldiers on guard. If there had been, they must have seen Jesus come out of the grave.

Luke Sharp was the third witness. In accordance with the teaching of Christ, he declined to be sworn, but made a solemn affirmation. He declared that when Mary and others came down to the grave two men in "shining garments" were in the sepulchre, and as Mary and the others were amazed and dumfounded on finding the body of Jesus gone, they bowed their faces to the earth. The men in shining garments said, "Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen." That Mary Magdalen and Joanna and Mary the mother of James thereupon went out and told the apostles, and that Peter subsequently came down to the grave and found, to his astonishment, that the "linen clothes laid by themselves;" and finally, that Jesus appeared unto his apostles and reproved them for their unbelief.

Cross-examined: Was sure the two persons in "shining garments" were men. Did not believe in angels. Never heard anything about an earthquake, or of revived corpses coming out of the grave. If any other witness had said that Roman soldiers guarded the tomb, such an one must have relied upon an unusually active imagination. Would affirm most positively that the two men in "shining garments" were not one.

John Short was the fourth witness. He was not present on the occasion, but had a friend who had an acquaintance who knew a young man that was. Examined, he declared that Mary came to the grave, and, looking into the sepulchre and finding the body gone, she wept. Whereupon two angels in white asked her why she wept. The angels comforted her. Jesus, however, appeared suddenly before her, and she mistook him for a gardener. Jesus afterwards appeared to Thomas the sceptic, and exhibiting himself, gave ocular proof of his identity.

Cross-examined: Would swear there were two angels. It was not true that he squinted, nor that he had been drinking at the time. Did not know of what gender the angels were. Might have been masculine, but thought they were neuter. Heard nothing about an earthquake, nor of Roman soldiers going to sleep. Could not say why Mary mistook Jesus for a gardener. Could not say he looked like one. Had never heard it suggested that somebody else had been crucified in the place of Jesus, but it might have been so.

And upon evidence like this Christians rest their belief in a "risen Christ." No wonder, indeed, that Paul says that if the story of the resurrection be not true, then are Christians "of all men most miserable."

Christian friends, in all candour now, does the story, upon the face of it, look true? Don't blush, but in your serious moments fling aside all prejudice, face the facts, and from your inmost conscience give yourself an honest answer—Yes or no.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

At a late catechising in church the following took place:—Minister (to the girl that stood highest): "What is thy name?" addressing a strapping wench of thirteen, the only daughter of the village Boniface. He received no reply. "What is thy name?" said the minister in a more peremptory manner. Girl: "Nin o' yer fun, parson—ye kna ma name vorra weel. Duon't ye say whon ye're at our house on a noet, 'Bet, bring me another pint o' yell?'" The congregation, in spite of the sacredness of the place, was on a broad grin. The minister looked daggers.

OBITUARY.—Died, on Wednesday, July 27, J. Theasby, a member of the Portsmouth Branch of the National Secular Society. He was respected by all who knew him, as a good husband and father and a pattern to society. In accordance with his own request, he was buried at the Portsea Island Cemetery by the members of the N. S. S., and the Secular Burial Service was used over his grave. There was a large assembly at this, the first Secular burial in Portsmouth, and the Secular hymns sung over the grave were specially printed for the occasion.



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