

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.

SHAKESPEARE'S RELIGION.

Our Prince of Peace in glory hath gone
With no Spear Shaken, no Sword drawn,
No cannon fired, no flag unfurled
To make his conquest of the world.

For him no martyr-fires have blazed,
No limbs been racked, no scaffolds raised ;
For him no life was ever shed
To make the Victor's pathway red.

And for all time he wears the crown
Of lasting, limitless renown :
He reigns, whatever monarchs fall ;
His throne is in the heart of all.

—Gerald Massey.

SHAKESPEARE is inexhaustible. Age cannot wither nor custom stale his infinite variety. Though the topic of his faith be trite, I also will give my opinion.* Shakespeare was a Freethinker. To me it is incredible that the glory of the human intellect, the foremost man of all this world, was bound by the trammels of the Christian creed. But I would decide this matter on no high *a priori* grounds. To the evidence.

Let it not be supposed that his age necessitated that Shakespeare should be a Christian, either Papist, Anglican or Independent, for he has been claimed by each of these sects. Out of the fierce conflict of the generation which preceded him—a conflict above which his works rest serene and indifferent as the stars above the clouds—Freethought arose. The dominant note of the Elizabethan literature is that of freedom. It was swayed even more by the Renaissance of Paganism than by the Reformation of Christianity. Italian Humanism had not only infiltrated our literature, but, in the person of Giordano Bruno, its highest representative visited our shores just before Shakespeare went to London. Bruno had the friendship of Sir Philip Sidney and Fulke Greville. He lived here, as George Henry Lewes said, “in the interchange of great thoughts and glorious aspirations, in the high communion of noble minds.” He publicly disputed at Oxford. That Shakespeare heard of him is more than probable.†

If ever man influenced Shakespeare it was Marlowe, the proud, full sail of whose great verse he evidently alludes to in Sonnet 86,‡ and whose hand can be clearly traced conjointly with his own in *Henry VI.*§ Marlowe, says Swinburne, “first guided Shakespeare in the right way of work.” Yet Marlowe was an Atheist and a pronounced anti-Christian. Only his death prevented a trial for blasphemy. Greene, in his *Great-worth of Wit*, that “crazy death-bed wail

of a weak and malignant spirit,” immediately preceding his reference to that “upstart crow” Shakespeare, alludes to Marlowe as a companion in saying, “like the foole in his heart, there is no God,” and mentions a companion who died miserably, possibly alluding to Francis Ket, M.A., who was burnt at Norwich (14 Jan., 1583) for blasphemy. Greene, as a Norwich man, would know of this case and the other martyrdoms for “blasphemy” in his city.* Shakespeare's method of dealing with religion was not that of the irreverent Titan Marlowe, but he none the less shows that he only concerns himself with human interests.

The only evidence adduced in favor of Shakespeare being a Catholic, beyond the references, in character, to such beliefs as purgatory,† is the tradition reported by Parson Richard Davies, who died in 1708, that “he dyed a Papist.” That this is without authority, the late date, together with the fact that Shakespeare was interred in the parish church, suffice to show. But, as Mr. J. O. Halliwell-Phillips points out, the story probably arose from his having refused the service of the vicar at his death-bed. This would set afloat such a tradition, though it would not have hindered his being accorded burial in the chancel as a highly-respected parishioner. On the other hand may be set the story that he died after having a drinking bout with grand old Michael Drayton and rare Ben Jonson. Dear Rabbie Burns, with Willie Nicol and Allan Masterton, could not match that trio.‡

The evidence that Shakespeare was a Protestant consists mainly in his frequent use of the Bible. Of this far too much has been made. Mr. Henry A. Jones, the dramatist, ridiculing the inferences drawn by Bishop Wordsworth from the fact, says: “Here is baptismal grace tottering upon the rickety foundation of two such dubious connoisseurs of spiritual matters as Harry of England and the Spartan dog, while our poet's confirmed, desperate, ineradicable, irreclaimable, irrefragable Paganism stands sure and ‘four-square to all the winds that blow,’ based upon no less than one hundred and twenty-nine adjurations and appeals to heathen Jove and Jupiter, to say nothing of the rest of the Pantheon.”§

Shakespeare was familiar with his Bible. When I come to the internal evidence, I will show that he used it as he used the supernatural—as its master. It is Sir John Falstaff who is richest in Bible allusion. The other books which we know Shakespeare used were profane and secular stories and plays, with North's Plutarch, the Pagan, Florio's Montaigne, the sceptic, and Rabelais, the blasphemous.

* Matthew Hamond in 1579, John Lewes in 1583, and Peter Cole in 1587.

† The reference to “evening mass” in *Romeo and Juliet*, Act iv., sc. 1, and the character of Cardinal Pandolpu in *King John*, suffice to show he was no Papist. Shakespeare thought much of Rome, but it was of ancient, Pagan Rome, to which he devoted three great plays.

‡ I by no means credit that Shakespeare died through a drinking bout, though he may have died after one. His works prove he was a temperate man.

§ “Religion and the Stage,” *Nineteenth Century*, Jan., 1885.

* I have a double call, having inserted Shakespeare's name in my *Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers*, and having promised Mr. W. J. Birch, author of *An Inquiry into the Philosophy and Religion of Shakespeare* (1848), that I would some day take up his subject. Now my friend is dead I will no longer delay.

† That Shakespeare was acquainted with the philosophy of Bruno is urged by Drs. Benno, Tscherschwitz, Brunnhofer and Falkson. Much also is to be said for his having been acquainted with Bruno's life and death.

‡ Sonnets 78 to 86 fit Marlowe better than any other. He is also clearly alluded to in *As You Like It*, Act III., sc. 5.

§ Swinburne and Fleay concur in this opinion.

There remains the preamble to Shakespeare's will. As this has been supposed decisive on the Christian side, let me recite it in full, premising only that it was executed on March 25, 1616, that is within one month of his death.

"In the name of God, amen! I, William Shackspeare, of Stratford upon Avon, in the countie of Warr., gent., in perfect health and memorie, God be prayesed, doe make and ordayne this my last will and testament in manner and forme following, that ys to saye, first, I commend my soule into the handes of God my Creator, hoping and assuredlie beleev- ing, through thonellie merites of Jesus Christe my Saviour, to be made partaker of lyfe everlastinge, and my bodye to the earth whereof yt ys made. Item, I give and bequeath," etc.

This was the stereotyped legal phraseology of the time. It was not written by Shakespeare, but by his lawyer's scrivener. Shakespeare had evidently given to this lawyer a statement of how he wished his things disposed of, letting him use his own legal jargon. That Shakespeare signed the document does not even warrant that he was "in perfect health,"* still less his adherence to other than the testamentary items which follow. My signature of a document with the legal formula "in the year of our Lord 1891," does not imply that I acknowledge Jesus as my Lord or believe he was born so many years ago. Shakespeare was not the man either to insert needless phraseology or to spoil a will by objecting to it.

Mr. J. O. Halliwell-Phillipps, who, in his *Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare*, has brought together all that is known concerning him, says (vol. i., p. 266) "there is nothing in short in a single one of the contemporary evidences to indicate that he ever entered any of the circles of religious partizanship."

But I contend not only that he was no sectarian, but that he was essentially a sceptic. For this I must beg the reader to examine the internal evidence and read himself into the huge heart and comprehensive mind of our poet. I only argue that there is nothing in the external evidence to overthrow my contention. It must not be forgotten that the Church and Stage Guild is a very modern institution. For two hundred years plays and play-actors were the opprobrium of the pious. The great dramatist has only been patronised by the priests since they discovered that he could not be suppressed.

In the dearth of external evidence the following little item may be worthy of notice. In 1589 the Martin mar-prelate tracts, which defied the attempts of the Star Chamber to gag opinion, excited much controversy. Lyly, the Euphuist, and Nash, the satirist, among others, entered the lists against them, and they had been ridiculed on the stage. As these plays were on the side of the clergy, they were not interfered with. But in Nov., 1589, in consequence of certain players handling "matters of Divinity and State without judgment or decorum," in other words having the impertinence to suppose there were two sides. Lord Burleigh—who in 1572 had complained of the queen's own household as "a coverture for no small number of Epicures and Atheists, because the court is not comprehended within a parish, but seemeth to be a lawless place"—sent an order to "stay" them. This Shakespeare's company resented and defied. The mayor "committed two of the players to one of the compters." But they gained their end, for plays on both sides were suppressed. Mr. F. G. Fleay (*Chronicle History of the Life and Work of W. S.*, p. 103) says: "It is pleasing to find Shakespeare's company acting in so spirited a manner in defence of Freethought and free speech: it would be more pleasing to identify him personally as the chief leader in the movement. And this I believe he was." Mr. Fleay—one of the best judges in such a matter—determines that it was *Love's Labor Lost*,

* It is signed three times with evidence of the hand growing weaker.

which was produced in Nov., 1589. The very moral and purport of this play is to show the inutility of vows.

Then there is the epitaph on Mrs. Hall, Shakespeare's eldest daughter, which implies, as Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps remarks, that Shakespeare's life had not been one of piety. She inherited his wit, but received from God what her father could not bestow, the wisdom necessary for salvation.

Witty above her sexe, but that's not all,

Wise to salvation was good Mistris Hall;

Something of Shakespeare was in that, but this

Wholly of Him with whom she's now in blisse.

Shakespeare had no part or lot in her religion.

J. M. WHEELER.

(To be concluded.)

PRESIDENTIAL NOTES.

MR. STANLEY JONES, of Liverpool, has been appointed as paid secretary by the National Secular Society's Executive. There has been very great difficulty in filling the office, and I must beg a fair trial for Mr. Jones, who will give his heart and strength to the work, and I hope succeed in winning the respect and confidence of the party in the ensuing twelve months. Owing to Mr. Forder's illness, and pre-occupation in his business, the work is much in arrear.

Mr. Forder consents to hold the post of honorary secretary for twelve months: Mr. Jones will therefore have the benefit of his guidance in rather difficult duties. For convenience, the N. S. S. office will for the present be over Mr. Forder's shop.

Every Branch of the N. S. S. should be making preparations for being represented at the Birmingham Conference. Matters of great importance will have to be discussed. Notices for the Conference agenda must be sent in to the Secretary by April 27, in order that the publication may be duly made in the Freethought papers a fortnight before White-Sunday.

Before leaving England for America to attend a Theosophic Convention, Mrs. Besant has issued a circular, in which she states that the control of the Bradlaugh Memorial Hall is to be "entirely in the hands of members of the N. S. S." This is absolutely untrue. Any Freethinker can apply for shares in the Bradlaugh Memorial Hall Company, Limited; and according to the Articles of Association, every shareholder is eligible as a Director. All the N. S. S. will do is to invest in shares the funds it has collected, and that these should be held by appointed members is an obvious dictate of common sense.

Mrs. Besant also refers to herself as "excluded from the Memorial Committee by the N. S. S." This is likewise untrue, if it means that she is personally excluded. When the matter was discussed on the Executive, I refused to let the debate turn upon anyone's personality. The question was one of general principle and policy. Something, of course, can be said against any policy. But that is no real objection. A choice has always to be made between alternative policies, and those who wait until they find one against which nothing can be said will require a very large supply of patience. The matter was decided by the Executive after ample discussion. There was no occasion for me to vote, as the majority was two to one. Had I voted, I should have supported the resolution that was carried, for which I am prepared to take the fullest responsibility.

Mrs. Besant is excluded for no personal reason. She is excluded simply because N. S. S. projects must

be carried out by N. S. S. members. No one can be outside a society and inside it too.

I confess I am a little tired of this talk about the exclusiveness of the N. S. S. I know of only three Freethought Societies in England that are not included in the N. S. S., and one of these, the Chatham Secular Society, seceded from the N. S. S. on account of a misunderstanding with Mrs. Besant. It seems to me that the N. S. S. is pretty comprehensive, and quite able to do its own work without begging extraneous support. And although I have no wish to be dictatorial, I must honestly say that my view will have to be reckoned with by those who think otherwise.

When Branches were passing resolutions in approval of this policy, I desired them to refrain. But I see that the Nottingham Branch has passed a resolution, regretting that "the Executive should have so framed the qualification for the Bradlaugh Memorial Committee as to exclude Mrs. Besant from serving on it." If the Nottingham Branch has been misled by Mrs. Besant's circular, I hope it will notice my contradiction. If it has not, I regret that it has introduced a personality into a matter of principle. I also regret that, while sending its resolution to three other persons, it did not think it necessary to send its resolution to me.

Having explained the policy of the Executive, which is also mine, I can have nothing further to say unless it is challenged in a constitutional manner.

Mr. J. Robinson, who was recently insulted by a London coroner, turns out to be a member of the N. S. S. He has furnished me with full information, and I am taking steps to have the matter dealt with, if possible by a question in the House of Commons.

G. W. FOOTE,
President, N. S. S.

FUND FOR THE LIQUIDATION OF MR. BRADLAUGH'S LIABILITIES.

A Friend (Douglas), 10s.; Wood Green Branch N. S. S., 5s.; Mr. Thomas, 10s.; Gosnot, 6d.; Steward, 6d.; Jackson, 1s.; Maning, 1s.; Yeates, 6d.; Trew, 6d.; Gordon, 1s.; Harret, 2s. 6d.; J. D. Pottage, 10s.; C. J., £1; Mrs. M., 10s.; R. Skinner, 1s.; J., 1s.; C. P., jun., 6d.; S. A., jun., 6d.; Y. J. A., 6d.; T. G., 6d.; T. R. Wilkinson, 1s.; J. S., 3d.; A. W., 3d.; J. D. Pottage, 4s. 6d.; Ludwig Monde (Rome), £20; George Collins, No. 1, 2s. 6d.; George Jacob Holyoake, £2; H. B. Windred, 5s.; J. Donaldson, £2; Kidderminster, 1s.; Thos. Alwth, 5s.; John Beswick, 1s.; Thos. Beswick, 2s. 6d.; Oliver Holt, 1s.; Joseph Livsey, 1s.; James Kershaw, 1s.; Thos. Dobson, 2s. 6d.; Dan Standing, 1s.; Arthur Cook, 1s.; A Friend (pro J. Lees, Rochdale), £2 2s.; R. E. M., returned interest, 7s. 6d.; J. C. Menden, 10s.; Blackburn Branch N. S. S., £2 2s. 6d.; H. Baker, 10s.; H. R., 10s. 6d.; H. Symes, 2s. 6d.; T. Baxter, 2s. 6d.; R. Morgan, 2s. 6d.; F. Rogers, 5s.; H. Rogers, 2s.; Mrs. J. G. Rogers, 5s.; J. H. Warren, 10s.; H. W. Parsons, £2 10s.; W. H. Cooper and J. Jones, 10s.; G. B., 5s.; A. C., 5s.; W. W., 5s.; W. S., 5s.; J. M. N., 5s.; collected at S. Standing's meeting at Bradford, 10s. 6d.; J. N. B., 5s.; Cartile, 10s.; W. Coppen, 5s.; J. T. Thornton, 3s.; A Friend, 5s. By W. Crowther Tolleration, 2s.; J. Greenwood, £1 1s. By J. Settle: Geo. Parkins, 6d.; James Settle, 2s. By Amos Kershaw: W. Horsfall, £1 1s. 4d.; A Friend, 1s. —W. H. REYNOLDS, Camplin House, New Cross, London, S.E.

Under the title of "Bible Explorations," the Rev. W. S. Lewis asks the readers of the *Church Monthly* to describe a number of Bible journeys. He mentions for instance "A prophet's journey, in which he appears to have made no use of his feet." To this our correspondent who sends us the paper has added, "A journey which commenced with two packasses and ended with three." "A journey which ended simultaneously in a closed room in Jerusalem, and in a mountain in Galilee."

COL. INGERSOLL DENIES WITH EMPHASIS.

A few days ago we published in *The Blade* a little story which is floating on the newspaper sea, credited to the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, to the effect that, on a slushy, sleety day, the late Washington McLean was sitting in the reading-room of the Riggs House at Washington, when Col. Ingersoll entered. The following is the conversation quoted:—

As he entered the apartment he held out his hand, saying:—"Hello, Wash., how do you do?" Mr. McLean took his hand, and, as he did so, said:—"Colonel, I wish you could have been here a little while ago. I saw a scene out there that made me wish I was twenty years younger. A poor, old, crippled soldier was limping across the avenue, when a young lusty fellow ran by him, and, as he did so, kicked the crutch from under him and tumbled him down into the slush." "The villain!" said Ingersoll. "He should have been sent to the penitentiary." "Do you really think so?" said McLean. "Why, certainly," replied the Colonel, "What else could I think?" "And yet, Colonel," said McLean, "that is what you are doing every week in the year. Here are poor, old, infirm Christians with nothing to aid or support them but their belief in religion; nothing to keep them out of the mire of despair but faith; and yet you go about kicking the crutch from under them worse than even this fictitious fellow did to this fictitious soldier."

We have just received the following letter from Col. Ingersoll concerning the above:—

"New York, Dec. 26, 1890.

"Editor *Toledo Blade*.

My Dear Sir,—My attention was called to an article in your paper in reference to a conversation claimed to have taken place between the late Washington McLean and myself.

"Nothing of the kind ever occurred. The same story was told, with Henry Ward Beecher in the place of Mr. McLean. Mr. Beecher denied it, and I did the same.

"As a matter of fact, nothing could be more idiotic than the idea that men who are destroying superstition are taking crutches from Christian cripples. Will the Christians admit that they are cripples, and will they admit that their creeds are crutches? Will they also admit that the Freethinker takes away their crutches and leaves them helpless cripples? It would be cruel to take crutches from a cripple; on the other hand, it would be exceedingly philanthropic and humane to cure the cripple, so that he would throw away the crutches himself.

"My effort has been to make man superior to superstition—to educate him to that degree that he shall need no crutches, and to convince him that a good cause never has, and never will, need the assistance of falsehood.

"There is not one word of truth in the story. No such conversation ever occurred.—Yours truly,

ROBERT G. INGERSOLL.

"We regret that we published the story, now that we know it to be false, and gladly give Col. Ingersoll as conspicuous a place for his denial as is possible. The story itself is an excellent one, and reflects credit on the luxuriant imagination and inventive talent of its author, whoever he may be. The Colonel follows his denial with a bit of caustic criticism, with the true Ingersollian flavor, which will be appreciated by every reader, irrespective of his own views on the subject of Christianity."—*Toledo Blade*.

CHRISTIAN EVIDENCE.

If in a court of justice it is often barely possible to elicit the truth when only recent events are under investigation, and contemporary documents are accessible and living witnesses are examined and cross-examined, and every safeguard against falsity is provided of which human fear and conscience admit, we may form some conception of what we have to ask from historic tradition before we can reconstruct in thought the true picture of a life such as that of Jesus of Nazareth, and such a growth as that of the Christian Church. We

cannot claim to have any known personal testimony to the contents of the ministry of Jesus, our earliest witness being the convert "born out of due time"; and our dependence for the previous time being on the synoptical gospels, which did not come into ascertained existence till the second or third generation after the events they relate, and then doubtless embodied simply the mixed popular tradition moulded by memory, reverence, and faith in this period of pure but uncritical enthusiasm.—*Rev. James Martineau, "Seat of Authority in Religion,"* p. 593, 1890.

REMINISCENCES OF CHARLES BRADLAUGH.

By G. W. FOOTE.

[CONCLUDED.]

WHEN Mr. Bradlaugh returned from India I called on him, and found him greatly improved by his voyage. I waited for him a few minutes in his library, as he was at lunch, and the doctors attached great importance to regularity in his meals. He came into the room with a most genial smile. His air was fresh and buoyant, and he walked over to me quickly, holding out his hand all the way. I took it heartily, and had a good look at him, which satisfied and yet dissatisfied me. He was certainly better, but I could not help feeling that his constitution was irrecoverably broken. Never again could I hope to see the grand Bradlaugh of the old fighting days. His mind was as brave and alert as ever, but the body was too obviously disabled.

He showed me some of his Indian presents, of which he was justly proud, and then we sat down to chat. He was full of his voyage and the kindness he had experienced on every side. His reception in India had exceeded his highest anticipations, and he was looking forward to work in the House of Commons on behalf of our great Dependency.

Speaking of his financial prospects, he told me he had received offers of work from several magazine editors. But he added, "one doesn't know how long it will last; 'tis a precarious business." His face clouded for a moment, and I saw he was more troubled than he cared to say.

One thing he told me which I had no right to repeat while he lived, but I may repeat it without a breach of confidence now that he is dead.

During his brief stay in India he could have had plenty of money if he had been less scrupulous. There was nothing very dishonourable in accepting money from rich Hindoos, for he was poor and broken in health, and he was fighting for their best interests. But he was too proud to take it, and when wealthy natives were calling on him, he always took the precaution to have an English friend in the room.

"No," he said to me, "I cannot do that. I'll live like the old Bradlaugh, or I'll go under."

He lived like the old Bradlaugh, and he went under. He took to the platform again to earn a livelihood, and it killed him, as his doctors had foreseen. I implored him at the time not to resume the lecturing. He was going to fulfil an old-standing engagement at Manchester in the vast St. James's Hall, and I begged him to cancel it, but he replied that he could not afford to forfeit twenty pounds. "What is that to your life?" I asked. He only smiled grimly. His mind was made up, and he was not to be bent by advice.

On Sunday morning, February 16, 1890, Mr. Bradlaugh resigned his presidency of the National Secular Society, which he had held for so many years. The Hall of Science was packed with members, chiefly from the London district, but many of them from the provinces. All were eager to see him. He took the chair, and sat for the last time with the Old Guard.

The scene was infinitely pathetic. One sentiment reigned in every heart. The Old Guard was taking leave of its General. Some of them had fought around him for thirty years, and the farewell was a mutilation of their very lives. Tears were streaming down strong faces; and they coursed down the strongest face of all, the face of Charles Bradlaugh, and plashed on the table before him. For a while he let them fall, and then he controlled his grief and rose to speak. But the words would not come. His frame shook with a great sob, and he sat down again. A second time he rose and failed. But the third time his strong will prevailed, and he began to speak in low, trembling tones.

In resigning the presidency he thought it his duty to nominate a successor. His choice was ratified by the meeting; he handed me the president's hammer after a solemn, impressive apostrophe, in which he expressed his hope that he might thank me, after many years, for good, loyal work as leader; and when I had acknowledged the lofty honor he rose to vacate

the chair. Naturally I declined to let him do anything of the kind, and for a moment the two Presidents stood together in friendly altercation. But for once he gave way, and Charles Bradlaugh filled the chair to the last.

Months rolled by, and the evening came for the great debate on the Eight Hours Bill between Mr. Bradlaugh and Mr. Hyndman. St. James's Hall was packed to suffocation. I sat on the platform near my old leader, and I saw how the effort was telling on him. His opponents in the meeting behaved with incredible brutality. Some of them laughed aloud when he said, "Believe me, this has tried me more than I had thought." But now the hero they laughed at is dead, and they *know* that he spoke the truth.

The last time I saw Mr. Bradlaugh in public was on Wednesday evening, December 10, 1890, when he lectured at the Hall of Science on behalf of the Forder Testimonial Fund. I believe that was the last lecture he delivered there, if not the last lecture he delivered anywhere. He dealt with the Evidences of Christianity, in reference to Archdeacon Watkins' lectures on the Fourth Gospel, and assuredly he was as firmly sceptical as ever. At the close of the lecture he spoke of his theological position, and declared that he could not conceive of any such change of mind as glib gossipers were asserting of him.

The weather was extremely foggy, and Mr. Bradlaugh was ill. He ought not to have been there at all. After struggling painfully through the lecture, he sat down and waited for discussion. A Christian opponent rose, and Mr. Bradlaugh replied; but, being in the chair, I would not allow a second speech, and I was glad to see him well wrapt-up, and once more in the care of his devoted daughter.

In closing these Reminiscences—which will soon be reprinted, after revision and amplification—I must be allowed to express my sense of the inadequacy of my sketch. But it will be recollected that I have not attempted a portrait of Charles Bradlaugh. I have only done what I promised at the outset. I have jotted down some of my recollections of this great man; and when his Life is written, as it will be some day, I may be found to have furnished a point or two to his biographer.

JESUS AND PRAYER.

There is one more point as to which his teaching will not bear investigation. It is the doctrine of the power of prayer. He tells his hearers, in the most absolute manner that they will receive whatever they may ask in prayer, provided they believe (Mark xi., 24; Matt. xxi., 22). Faith is the grand and sole condition of the accomplishment of all desires. This is the explanation of the withered fig-tree. It was faith that had wrought the change. By faith the disciples might effect not only such matters as the destruction of fig-trees, but far more stupendous miracles (Matt. xxi., 19-20). This is the explanation of the disciples' failure with the lunatic child. It was owing to their want of faith. Had they but faith as a grain of mustard seed—so Jesus told them—they would be able to say to a mountain, "Remove hence thither," and it would be removed. Nothing would be impossible to them (Matt. xvii., 20). And if they had faith themselves, if they really believed in their master's word, and ever attempted the experiment of working such transformations in nature, they must have expressed the bitter disappointment so graphically described by the author of *Joshua Davidson* in the case of that sincere Christian. But short of this extreme trial of the power of faith over matter, many generations of pious believers will bear sad witness to the fact that they have asked many things in prayer which they have not received; not least among the number being moral excellence, which they have but imperfectly attained. Yet this, it would seem, might be the most easily granted without interference with the physical universe. And if it be pleaded that no Christian has ever really succeeded in acquiring the degree of faith required to move mountains, what becomes of the promise of Jesus? Is it not a mere form of words, depending for its truth on a condition which human nature can never fulfil?—*Amberley, "Analysis of Religious Belief,"* vol. i., p. 470.

ACID DROPS.

According to a current story in Glasgow, one of the first ministers in the city announced his forthcoming pastoral visitation of a particular neighborhood, and concluded by saying that "in the visitation he meant to embrace all the servant girls who were members of his church." All ministers are not so candid.

Professor Max Muller has issued the second volume of his Gifford Lectures under the title of *Physical Religion*. In some respects they are very outspoken, and this has so alarmed the Scotch bigots that a movement is projected to abolish the Gifford chair on the pretext that the bequest could not be legally accepted by the University. Such at least is the report of the *Daily Chronicle*, and we should not be sorry to see the bequest a subject of litigation. It would help to expose the iniquitous law under which heresy is robbed of the rights of citizenship.

Catholics within the Papal diocese were granted a dispensation from fasting during Holy Week on account of the influenza. The Pope is aware that Catholics object to sneezing themselves into heaven.

Catholic Home gives currency to the lie that Paul Bert "called for a priest on his own dying bed, and made his confession." This lie was concocted and circulated while Paul Bert's body was being brought from Tonquin to France. His widow contradicted it on landing, and her husband had a civil (State) burial. But lying for the glory of God, or at least for the glory of the Church, will never cease until Christianity expires.

A village in the department of Isère, France, upon its priest being suspended for living openly with a family of his own, including several children, received the newly-appointed priest with a volley of stones, and half of them have turned Protestants. They know there is greater security for their wives and daughters from a married priest than from a celibate.

At what is called "Pleasant Sunday Afternoons," at a seaport town on the south coast last Sunday, it fell to the lot of a captain, whose name we will keep back, to read a chapter from God's Holy Word for discussion. It was to be the 33rd chapter of Ezekiel. The reader made a mistake—or someone else made it for him—and he read the 23rd chapter, much to the astonishment and disgust of many ladies, who got up and left the church.

Further drastic measures are, it is stated, to be resorted to against the Jews in Russia, who expect to be expelled from Moscow, whence as many as 14,000 may have to find other quarters, unless they are able to secure tolerance by bribes or pretended conversions.

The Rev. Jackson Wray, the hardworking minister of Whitfield Tabernacle, in Tottenham-court-road, has broken down and resigned his pastorate. According to Dr. Parker's account, Mr. Wray surrendered his salary in order to assist in the erection of a new church, and said he would take whatever the people threw into the box for him. In a few months his income was reduced by three-fourths. So much for the voluntary system in Christian churches when the worshippers have a fair opportunity of gratifying their meanness.

A lot of unclaimed freight was recently sold at Liverpool. Among the goods there turned out to be some hundreds of manuscript sermons written by a once famous clergyman. The purchaser discovered some very curious notes on the margins, such as the following: "Deliver this passage in solemn tone," "Scornful smile after the word 'never,'" "Close Bible with violent slam after this passage," "Contemplate the ceiling in attitude of adoration at this point," "Sarcastic wave of the hand."—*Answers*.

The *Los Angeles Times* gives prominence to a sensational case against the Rev. S. J. Fleming, of that city, who is charged with rape upon Annie Petersen, a Danish nurse-girl who took care of his children. According to her story, he said, "It's all right; if it was not so, God would not have made us."

The Rev. J. Bell-Cox, of St. Margaret's, Liverpool, has published his correspondence with Dr. Hakes, his objectionable parishioner, who fancies that a man who takes the wages of the Establishment should conform thereto. Mr. Bell-Cox is anxious for peace on his own terms, and evidently supposes he ought to be allowed to put his own construction on Church formulas. The case is likely to come again before the courts.

"Instead of minding her baby, she went about the streets selling the *War Cry*," was the account given of the first wife of a bigamist tried at the Central Criminal Court last week. We do not know that this is any excuse for bigamy, but it probably made the jury sympathetic, for the bigamist got off with a sentence of imprisonment for one day, which the Court construed into an order for immediate release.

The "Rev. Dr." Oswald Keating, who was imprisoned at Dublin a few years ago as an impostor, died recently in a Sydney gaol, where he was doing five years for criminal assault. The post-mortem examination showed disease of the brain. Probably the scamp's admirers still sigh over him as an ill-used man and something of a martyr.

We regret to see that our old antagonist, the Rev. Dr. James McCann, has got into the Bankruptcy Court. Birmingham air doesn't seem to agree with him, and the 80 per cent. money lenders have put him in chancery. For those gentlemen we have little sympathy, but we hope the Dr. will pull through his trouble, and try to live on his £300 a year, which ought to be enough for any believer in the Sermon on the Mount.

A young woman, aged 17, named Elizabeth Ellen Monks, committed suicide near Bolton. She is described as having been a teacher at Slaterfield Wesleyan School, and very devoutly inclined. She left a letter, in which she declared "I am going to meet my Savior." Apparently another case of overmuch religion.

The Salvation Army treasurer at Reading is reported to have sloped with between £20 and £30, and with a young girl, with whom he had been very intimate. Alas! for the saints of the Lord. They are always subject to extra temptation from the Devil.

Margaret L. Shepherd, an Irishwoman, who has been a nun, is now exposing Romanism in America. She gives as her experience that many of the inmates of religious houses become idiotic, if not victims to the priests.

A Bill has been brought in before the Illinois Legislature, making it a misdemeanor to impersonate the spirit of a deceased person at any spiritualistic séance. The *Progressive Thinker* denounces it as an "infamous Bill."

Dr. Howe, of Hullerhurst, means to proceed in his heresy hunt against the Rev. Robert Joseph Kyd, minister of Stevenston, Ayrshire. This Established Scotch Kirk minister is charged with denying the real existence of Job, and with disbelief in the doctrines of eternal election and everlasting punishment. Mr. Kyd's congregation have lodged a petition with the Presbytery, in which they state that the charges are actuated by malice, and denounce Dr. Howe's conduct in engaging shorthand reporters to take down Mr. Kyd's words as showing "an unchristian spirit."

A religious paper gives the following specimen of how biblical instruction is given in the Sabbath-school. When Joseph's brethren saw him approaching—that is coming, you know—they consulted among themselves—that is, took counsel among themselves, or discussed the matter among themselves, tried to make up their minds what to do. So they resolved—determined, you know, made up their minds—to kill him. But Reuben wanted to save him, so he suggested—hinted, said, you know, oh yes, *advised* them to put him in a pit, and he would get him out privately—secretly, quietly, without letting the others know, and bring him safe to his father. So they did this, and soon a caravan—that is a troop with horses and camels and asses and merchandise—that is goods, you know, like oil and spices—what your mother puts into cakes and puddings, you know—this caravan of Ishmaelites—just what we call Arabs now, they were descended, that is, sprung from—I mean Ishmael was

their grandfather, or at anyrate their forefather—Abraham's son, you remember, that was sent into the wilderness."

Faith of our Fathers is the title of a monthly magazine "devoted to the cause of the conversion of England according to the intentions of the Guild of Our Lady of Ransom." It appears from the April number that Ransomers devoted to this great purpose exist not only in all the large towns, but even in many of the smaller provincial ones. The Catholics are earnest and active, and it behoves us to be equally so.

Bishop Moorhouse has been lecturing against secular education, which he is bold enough to say is a failure in Australia. He means it fails to serve the interests of priests. He knows well enough that if his nonsense is not instilled into the tender minds of children, it has little chance of taking root when they reach maturity. Instead of asking school teachers—who have enough to do while the parsons are taking it easy—to inculcate religion, Bishop Moorhouse should try the effect of having religious instruction given by the clergy after the secular lessons are over, and then see how many are willing to attend.

The Rev. Walter Walsh has been lecturing against the doctrine of eternal hell to a large congregation at the Rye Hill Baptist Church. He entitled his lecture "Larger Hope: Who is on the throne—God or Devil?" Undoubtedly, if orthodoxy be correct, God, the creator of hell, is a Devil. But Mr. Walsh cannot get away from the fact that the doctrine he spurns has been the creed of the great bulk of the Christian Church, and that it is founded on the most clear and explicit declarations of Scripture. Any who doubt this should consult Mr. Wheeler's pamphlet, *The Christian Doctrine of Hell*.

Spurgeon and Joe Parker are too much in the same way of business to hit it as personal friends. It has been customary for Nonconformist Sunday-school teachers to meet once a-year to listen to an address from some well-known divine. The gathering has regularly taken place in Parker's City Temple. This year Mr. Spurgeon was invited to deliver the address. He stipulated that the meeting should take place elsewhere, not caring to draw an audience of Sunday-school teachers to one he considers pretty far gone on the Downgrade.

The pious Lord's Day Observance Society have been so vigilant in their attempt to put down Sunday music at Scarborough that they prosecuted the *Scarborough Mercury* for inserting advertisements of a sacred concert, to which persons were admitted by the payment of money; claiming penalties of £100. The *Mercury* allowed judgment to go by default, and then applied to the Home Secretary for remission of penalties under the Act of 1875. This was accorded; so the Lord's Day Observance Society has put itself to much trouble for nothing.

The Act under which these prosecutions take place, that of 21 Geo. III., c. 49, was passed at the instance of the Bishop of London in 1781, after the Gordon riots, when the authorities were in a state of great disquietude at the tumults occasioned by religious discussion. It is high time this antiquated instrument of tyranny was taken out of the hands of bigots.

A census enumerator found one family quite of the Biblical patriarch type. The ages were put down as Albert Jenkins, 407; Mary Ann Jenkins, 401; Thomas Jenkins, 201. On inquiry it was found this was the method of writing 47, 41, and 21. Perhaps the counts in Genesis of the great age of Adam and his successors may also be explicable, as having arisen through some similar mistake. The Holy Ghost may have added a figure or two in error.

An advertisement in the *Christian* asks, "Has any lady a mellow-toned guitar she would kindly give for the Lord's service?" Possibly an iron-framed piano would also be acceptable.

The Catholics have put forward a little book entitled *A Dearly Rescued Soul*, purporting to be the account of a conversion effected by Cardinal Newman. H. Dyer, of the Oratory, Edgbaston, finds it necessary to write to the papers, saying: "The volume as it stands, whatever grains of truth

it may contain, would seem to be neither more nor less than a work of imagination." The incident illustrates the process which evolved the legends of the saints. We have always held that even if the gospels could be shown to have existed far earlier than they did, they would still be as untrustworthy. Lies and legends spread so rapidly.

The *Church Times*, in its "Church Defence Notes," in regard to the efforts made by Liberationists in the cause of Disestablishment, says: "For every thousand pounds raised by our opponents, Churchmen should, without difficulty, produce two thousand pounds." So they should; only it is not Churchmen at large, but the parsons, who receive church emoluments, who should shell out for their own defence. They are heavily endowed and will hardly spare expense in fighting to retain their endowments. The *Church Times* is evidently aware the question is mainly one of £ s. d.

No tobacconists are allowed to be open on Sunday in Massachusetts. If, however, you want a smoke, you call at the chemist's and ask for an anodyne. Cigars are done up in packets labelled "Anodyne—to allay restlessness, calm mental and bodily nervousness, and to produce a delightful languor and repose. A palliative for nervous cough and paroxysms of chronic asthma. An aid to digestion. *Caution*: This drug should be kept beyond the reach of children."

There is to be a dinner on April 22 at the Hotel Metropole. Is there? the reader will say—what of that? But this is a peculiar dinner. It is in aid of the St. John's Foundation School, for the cheap education of sons of the poor clergy, and the Postmaster-General is to take the chair, although he would be much better employed in correcting some of the imbecilities of his department.

A circular sent out with the dinner invitations sets forth some awful facts. There are 400 beneficed clergymen with incomes under £50 a year. Very likely. But why appeal to laymen for them? Cannot the bishops subscribe a trifle out of their big incomes, or pluralists like Archdeacon Farrar? There are also 3,600 clergymen with incomes under £150 a year. Perhaps so. But would they earn any more, or as much, in another occupation? Are there not many men, abler than the average sky-pilot, who would jump at fifty-eight shillings a week?

There are also, it appears, no less than 7,000 curates with incomes under £130 a year. No doubt. But the remedy, if a remedy is wanted, is to dock something from the big livings and distribute it among the poorer clergy. Anyhow, it is a disreputable thing to cadge on behalf of men who are earning from £2 to £3 a week. If a curate cannot bring up a family on that income he has the same alternative as millions of his fellow citizens, who make no pretence of believing "Blessed be ye poor."

In China, numbers of people are in a state of indescribable misery, absolutely dying of famine. Their loving Father in heaven has little care for the heathen Chinese, who are periodically afflicted with these disasters.

The Prophet Baxter proclaims himself the founder and leader of the Prophecy Investigation Society, whereof the Dean of Ripon is president and Lord Kinnaird treasurer. As the object of the Christian Evidence Society is by no means to inquire into the evidence of Christianity, so the Prophecy Investigation Society does not investigate the truth of prophecy, but only the time of its supposed fulfilment, and this it leaves to the Prophet Baxter.

The Rev. J. Eckersley, vicar of Wednesbury, is troubled, or not troubled, with a very small congregation. Things have come to such a pass that his gorge rises at the yawning pews, and he has solemnly intimated that if the congregation does not improve in the next twelve months he shall feel it his duty to resign. Should Mr. Eckersley's example spread among the half-employed clergy, there will be a remarkable exodus from the Church. But we fear most of them love their livings too well to go out into the wilderness.

Dr. Momerie expresses the opinion that the Church is within measurable distance of dissolution. We are not so sure of this. A rotten door will hang long on creaking hinges—unless someone is prepared to give a decisive kick.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Saturday, April 18, St. Anne's Hall, Donegall-street, Belfast; at 8, "Oration on Charles Bradlaugh."
Sunday, April 19, St. Anne's Hall, Donegall-street, Belfast; 11.30, "The Fear of Death"; 3, "Did the Miracles of the New Testament ever Happen?"; 7, "A World Without God."
 April 26, Liverpool; 28, Deptford; 30, Hammersmith.
 May 3, Hall of Science; May 4, Northampton; 10, Camberwell; 17, N. S. S. Conference; 21, Stratford; 24, Manchester; 28, Stratford; 31, Wolverhampton.
 June 7, Camberwell; 14 and 21, 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. Australia, China and Africa:—One Year, 8s. 8d.; Half Year, 4s. 4d.; Three Months, 2s. 2d. India:—One Year, 10s. 10d.; Half Year, 5s. 5d.; Three Months, 2s. 8½d.

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.

It being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will in future receive the number when their subscription expires in a colored wrapper.

G. H.—You can't expect Christians to publish such an edition of the Bible. 'Tis like crying "stinking fish!"

H. COURTNEY.—Copy of bill to hand.
 S. STANDRING.—Of course you are in no way responsible for Marchant's misrepresentation, and you had a perfect right to do what you did. Thanks for your narrative of the facts, showing the "impudent falsehood" of Marchant's statement that he debated with a "representative" of the N. S. S.

G. L. MACKENZIE.—Thanks. Shall appear.
 H. H.—Glad to hear from you as one of our converts. Mr. Forder will send you certificate of membership. We don't expect a big annual subscription from a soldier. Whatever you subscribe involves self-denial.

T. WOOTWELL.—Accept our thanks. The Reminiscences of Charles Bradlaugh, revised and amplified, will be published next week—as a sixpenny pamphlet.

W. LAPPAGE.—Always glad to receive materials for a paragraph.

MANCHESTER FRIEND.—Thanks for cutting.
 J. HEADLEY, 40 Howard-street, Great Yarmouth, sells this journal and other Secular publications.

G. W. NIVEN.—We are obliged.
 W. WEVER.—The word "awe" has more shades of meaning than you appear to recognise. Mr. Bradlaugh's wavering is quite inconceivable to us, but if he had wavered it would not have shaken our own convictions. We attach more importance to a man's attitude when his brain is strong than to his attitude when it is affected by disease or approaching dissolution.

J. E. B.—"Mark" was a misprint for "Luke." You are quite correct. The nearest Branch to Paddington is probably the West London. See Guide to the Lectures.

P. KAVANAGH.—Mr. Forder will write you. He can supply you with the *N. R.*—twopence weekly, and a penny extra for postage. Your card of membership shall be forwarded.

W. JANSEN.—German stamps are not current here. Remit by international post office order, and the pamphlets shall be sent and your stamps returned.

ROBERT ROBERTSON.—Proof that hospitals existed before Christ is given in the *Westminster Review* of Oct., 1877. Under the Roman empire physicians were elected in every city in proportion to the inhabitants, and paid out of the treasury. Suetonius relates that the Emperor Tiberius made it his business to visit the sick. Prescott, in his *History of the Conquest of Mexico*, chap. ii., mentions that before the advent of Christians "Hospitals were established in the principal cities for the cure of the sick." Hospitals for the insane were instituted by the Mohammedans while the Christian world still considered them as possessed with devils.

H. R. CLIFTON.—Prophet Baxter is getting quite a bore. The fun is nearly played out.
 J. WARD.—We cannot say. Ask Dr. Parker himself. The bill is silly and disreputable.

B. B. SYKES.—We regret to hear that Mr. Wise condescends so low. The Leeds affair had nothing whatever to do with the Secular Society, and the very fact that our libellers have to go back half a generation shows the scantiness of their material. We thought Mr. Wise was capable of better things.

A. B. MOSS.—Sorry to hear you are laid up, but hope you will soon recover. The party cannot afford to lose the service of a good worker.

C. CARTER.—Your friend's verses are fair, but scarcely up to our mark.

C. H. KELF.—Pleased to hear from you. Glad to have your opinion, formed on the spot, that the fight in Ireland is damaging the Church.

G. WHEELER.—The N. S. S. secretary will write you.

D. MARTIN.—There is no such passage. You have confused two texts in different parts of the New Testament. You will find our *Bible Handbook* a cheap Concordance, and useful in such inquiries.

R. IRELAND.—Dr. T. R. Allinson is a member of the N. S. S. Those who want a *sensible* doctor cannot do better than consult him. Like the Peculiar People, he has little belief in physic; but, unlike them, he believes in science instead of prayer.

R. J. MURRAY.—Communications for the *Freethinker* should be addressed as above. Unfortunately, good books on early Church History are not published at the workmen's price.

CONSTANT READER.—Thanks. Will give it a paragraph next week.

GORGONZOLA.—Your certificate will be forwarded. We hope as many Freethinkers as possible will join the N. S. S. during the next three weeks.

L. EVANS.—"Not half enough of it" is the best fault in a paper. You don't say *what* facts you want a book of reference to.

E. R. ADAMS.—The N. S. S. cannot send representatives to every Christian lecture. Besides, the Woolwich Branch prefers to leave Mr. Baker alone while he opposes them in halls that are refused to them for Freethought lectures.

S. HARTMANN.—Many thanks. See paragraph.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Fritankaren—Liberty—Freethought—Ironclad Age—Menschenthum—Echo—Neues Frereligioses Sonntags-Blatt—Freidenker—The Liberator—Der Arme Teufel—Secular Thought—Boston Investigator—Western Figaro—La Vérité Philosophique—Progressive Thinker—Flaming Sword—Loyal American—Two Worlds—Star—Protestant Standard—Morpeth Herald—Reading Standard—Scarborough Mercury—Shields Daily Gazette—Daily News—Freeman's Journal—Bradford Daily Telegraph—Lancashire Evening Post—Thanet Advertiser—Open Court—Truthseeker—Irish News—Cork Examiner—Huddersfield Examiner—Northern Whig—Western Daily Mercury—Los Angeles Times—Newcastle Daily Leader.

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.

Owing to a pressure on our space, Mr. Foote's article, "Does It Pay?" has to stand over till next week.

A very good audience greeted Mr. Foote at Woolwich on Friday, April 10, in the Co-operative Hall. We hope some of those who applauded his Oration on Charles Bradlaugh will join the local Branch of the National Secular Society, which is carrying on a brave work amid many difficulties.

The same Oration drew a crowded audience at the Camberwell Secular Hall on Sunday evening. The committee took the opportunity to make a first-rate collection for the open-air work.

Nearly the required amount has already been subscribed by members of the National Liberal Club for the purchase of Mr. Walter Sickert's oil portrait of Mr. Bradlaugh, which is now on view in the library of that club. The portrait represents Mr. Bradlaugh seated, with his head bent down over his work. It is full of power and repose, but the expression is that of a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. The portrait, in short, is not of Mr. Bradlaugh in his prime, but as aged by care and the House of Commons.

The Camberwell Branch is getting a good list of supporters for the Bradlaugh Memorial Hall. Mr. Umpleby, who subscribes £25, has taken 25 pound shares in addition. Mr. S. Hartmann takes 18 shares, Mr. J. H. Ellis 10, Mr. Angus Thomas 10, and several other members a smaller number.

Mr. S. Hartmann, of the Camberwell Branch, brought the conduct of Deputy Coroner Wyatt, who insulted a Freethought juryman, before the two local members of the County Council. Mr. Hubbard raised the point at the Council meeting on Tuesday, and the matter was adjourned for a week.

Mrs. Samson will devote the profits of her pamphlet "Why Women Should Be Secularists" to the Bradlaugh Memorial Fund.

Great Thoughts has been interviewing the Rev. C. A. Berry, the famous Congregationalist, of Wolverhampton. A good deal of the conversation was about "the well-known Secularist leader and writer, G. W. Foote." Mr. Berry was asked whether he agreed with Mr. Foote that the churches were becoming secularised. His reply was that the churches are "rubbing out the popular and unwarrantable distinction between matters sacred and secular," but they are "not losing their grip of the unseen world and spiritual faith." But is not this conceding all that Mr. Foote claimed? When Christianity was supreme, the next life was everything; now it is waning, this life is becoming of prime importance. The more the churches attend to this life the less they attend to the next. Few men die suddenly, and religions never. They perish by dilution.

Mr. Berry agreed with his interviewer that Freethinkers are the most narrow-minded and intolerant people on the face of the earth. He also said "bah!" to the word Free-thought. Evidently he is out of temper, and this is a cheerful sign of his being hit. Mr. Berry ended by saying that "Mr. Foote must not begin to rejoice." But he *does* rejoice. He sees religion capitulating to the present world all along the line; and so long as the churches keep marching in this direction, he does not mind if they declare they are walking the opposite way. Facts speak louder than words.

Dr. Stanton Coit discourses at South Place Institute this morning (April 19) on the National Secular Society. No doubt some of our friends will be glad to hear him. We shall give a report of the discourse.

Mr. Charles Watts is still drawing crowded meetings in the Academy of Music, Montreal. The Sunday evening programme includes vocal and orchestral music.

Charles Watts is once more going to cross swords with Dr. Sexton. This time at Toronto. They have met so frequently on opposite sides of the same platform, that some will be tempted to compare them, as opposing counsel at law are compared, to shears which never cut each other but only that which comes between them.

Mr. Charles Watts will visit England about the end of June and return to Toronto in September. He will be open for lecturing engagements here during July and August. Applications should be sent to his son, C. A. Watts, 17 Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, E.C.

The quarterly meeting of the West Ham Branch N. S. S. was held last Sunday morning at the Secular Hall, Plaistow, and attended by a large number of members. Most of the old officers were re-elected. The committee's report showed continuous rapid improvement. Six new members had been made; the amount of donations and subscriptions had been the highest yet received; £3 13s. 2d. had been raised for benevolence, and the sale of literature had increased 12 per cent. on last quarter. Close upon £50 was dealt with by the officers of the Branch. A social tea was admirably served in the evening. The outdoor lectures commence on Plaistow Green on May 3.—E. ANDERSON, Hon. Sec.

Mr. G. J. Holyoake is president of the Holyoake Cycling Club, which is largely composed of members of the N. S. S. Its special object is to secularise the Sabbath. The secretary is Mr. E. Thornto, 1 Rochfort-cottages, Victoria-road, Peckham Rye, S.E.

A concert, in aid of the Bradlaugh Memorial Fund, is to be given at South-place Institute on Wednesday, May 6.

The war between priests and politicians is going on merrily in Ireland. The duty of Catholics to obey their priests in all things are appearing in the Irish papers, and the dispute grows hotter the longer it lasts.

The Charity Commissioners for England and Wales have chosen the Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, Leicester, as the place for inquiring into the foundation endowment and objects of an important Leicester charity. It is a very unusual thing

for a Secular hall to be used for a Government inquiry, if this be not indeed the first instance.

The *Luton Weekly Reporter* gives a long and fair report of Mr. Foote's Oration on Charles Bradlaugh, which it describes as "very eloquent."

We are glad to see that Mr. Foote's pamphlet, *Christianity and Progress*, has been of use to some of the writers on the heterodox side in the *Echo* correspondence on Christianity and Marriage.

The *Morpeth Herald* gives a fair report of the Sunday lectures at Blyth by Mr. C. J. Hunt, who, in consequence of the Central Hall being refused, after its having been taken and bills published, had to lecture in the theatre, obligingly let by Mr. Moody. Mr. C. J. Hunt appears to have been well received and to have given much satisfaction.

In an article devoted to the subject, the *Morpeth Herald* alludes to the many instances of injustice suffered by Freethinkers at the hands of Christians. It asks why the paid clergy attempt to suppress free utterance, and refuse to meet it face to face. It mentions that a Branch of the National Secular Society has been formed in Blyth, which promises to have a good following, and "if the local priests do not face the lecturers the ranks of the Freethought party will increase."

De Dageraad opens with a paper on Theosophy and other humbug from the pen of Fra Diavolo, who traces the connection of the latest fad with the old nonsense of the Kabbalists, alchemists, Rosicrucians, and Illuminati, including that prince of adepts, Count Cagliostro.

Next Thursday, April 23, is put down in the calendar as dedicated to the patron saint of England, the semi-mythical St. George, who historically was a pork dealer who became a bishop of Alexandria; while in the later myth of St. George and the Dragon he has taken on the character of the Egyptian god Horus. April 23 is, however, dedicated to a better man than St. George. It is the birthday of William Shakespeare, the real patron saint of our country—the poet who more than any other has added to the wealth of its intellectual life.

Mr. Felix Adler, an emancipated American Jewish rabbi and author of *Creed and Deed*, is coming to Europe to visit the Ethical Societies, of which he is one of the founders. He will probably lecture at South-place when in England.

The *Freethinker's Magazine* for April gives as frontispiece a view of the handsome monument erected to the memory of Horace Seaver, editor of the *Boston Investigator*. The first place is given to a paper by Mr. G. J. Holyoake on the Life and Character of Charles Bradlaugh. There are also papers on the Evolution of the Devil, Spiritualism, and the Bible in the Schools. Otto Wettstein writes of a First Cause, and asks, "What caused it to cause a universe 6,000 years, and not 60,000,000 years ago?" Altogether the number is an excellent one. We trust the circulation is increasing.

Mr. S. M. Peacock, president of the Northern Federation of the National Secular Society, heckled Mr. J. C. Stevenson, M.P., when that gentleman addressed his constituents last week. Mr. Peacock asked Mr. Stevenson if he would vote for the repeal of the disabilities now imposed upon Secularists in the matter of endowments and legacies. He received the satisfactory reply, "Certainly. A man should be able to do in his will what he is entitled to do in his lifetime."

HOW TO HELP US.

- (1) Get your newsagent to exhibit the *Freethinker* in the window.
- (2) Get your newsagent to take a few copies of the *Freethinker* and try to sell them, guaranteeing to take the copies that remain unsold.
- (3) Take an extra copy (or more), and circulate it among your acquaintances.
- (4) Display, or get displayed, one of our contents-sheets, which are of a convenient size for the purpose. Mr. Forder will send them on application.
- (5) Leave a copy of the *Freethinker* now and then in the train, the car, or the omnibus.
- (6) Distribute some of our cheap tracts in your walks abroad, at public meetings, or among the audiences around street-corner preachers.

FREETHOUGHT IN BELFAST.

OVER four years ago the Ulster Branch of the N. S. S. was established in Belfast, the seven members necessary for its formation being its complete complement, and even this number dwindled for a month or two until the meetings of the Branch became more widely known. Even at present the membership is not large, but the work performed by the Branch is not to be measured by the actual number of members it possesses. During the past two years it has suffered very large losses through deaths and members leaving Belfast to reside elsewhere. Our roll includes two medical doctors, a solicitor, Englishmen and Scotchmen, as well as natives, and we had a Russian Nihilist amongst us at one time, who has since left Belfast. He was the mildest and kindest wild revolutionist I have ever met.

The Branch has held weekly meetings on Sundays continuously almost since its commencement, and the subjects treated of at these meetings have covered nearly all the debateable ground in theology, politics, and social questions. The use of our platform has always been freely given to any of our opponents who were anxious to show us the error of our ways, and no one who ever took advantage of this privilege had any complaint to make on the score of unfair treatment in any way. Several clergymen have favored us with lectures at different times on varying subjects; Christian laymen of most diversified beliefs have propounded their views, and taken our criticism in the kindly and tolerant spirit in which it was given. Our Christian opponents are invariably civil and decent in the expression of their opinions, but we have, of course, occasionally experienced the coarse and blatant bigot given to assertion and bombast, and unwilling to conform to ordinary rules of debate. Our courteous and firm treatment of these gentlemen has always been sufficient to reduce them to order, and the sympathy of the audience has always been with us in these encounters.

During the winter months the meetings are better attended, and the expectation of a warm discussion on some interesting theological point always draws a good audience. The Abercorn Hall can accommodate about two hundred people, and we have had it well filled on several occasions. Arrangements are being made by the Branch to secure a comfortable little hall entirely under its own control throughout the week.

About eighteen months ago the spread of Secularism here attracted the attention of one of the self-important Orange divines of the city, and he delivered a fierce diatribe against it in the Ulster Hall. This was the Rev. Dr. Kane, and some of our members interviewed him after the sermon and demanded some better authority than himself for the assertions he had made in it. This he declined to give, and referred them, with a wave of his hand, to universal history. Mr. Foote replied to this sermon in the *Freethinker*, and we considered his reply worthy of being reprinted, and a few bold spirits among us distributed nearly a thousand of these reprints among the doctor's congregation as they were leaving the church the following Sunday evening. Experience was sufficient to teach Dr. Kane, as it teaches other parties, and he has left us severely alone ever since. On this occasion the press was referred to by Dr. Kane as a means at our disposal for refuting his opinions; but there is not a daily newspaper in Belfast that has not at one time or another deliberately refused to allow us to reply to correspondence or other matter that had been freely inserted to advance Christianity or vilify Freethought. One evening newspaper inserts our advertisements, but its proprietors have been asked by gentle Christians more than once to refuse us this privilege, and we do not know but it may be stopped at any time.

Another specimen of Christian charity was exhibited by the local Y.M.C.A., in hoping that the management of the Royal Hospital—an unsectarian institution—would refuse a contribution from us, being the admission charged at a debate on the existence of God. The hospital treasurer had more sense than the Y.M.C.A. gave him credit for, and the disinterested character of their advice became very prominent when it was discovered that the Y.M.C.A. had not contributed a single penny to the hospital.

About six months ago we had our first visit from Mrs. Besant, and the only hall we could obtain was a large unseated one of rather unprepossessing appearance, named St. Anne's. Very large audiences attended the whole course of three lectures. This hall was the only one available for Mr. Foote on the present occasion—his first visit to Ireland, I believe.

We have always maintained a vigorous propaganda by the sale of literature of an advanced character. During 1890 our

sales realised £21 3s. 5d.: the spread of this through the north of Ireland cannot fail in having good effect upon the people. Our isolated position has always made it difficult for us to bring lecturers from a distance, but this, I think, has also had its advantage in developing a self-reliance that makes us determined to fight the battle of freedom on to victory; and if we do not enjoy the fruits ourselves we will have the consolation that our fight has cleared the way for future workers who will reap the harvest of our toil. We are proud of being the premier Branch in dear old Ireland, and the work we are pushing forward will not be allowed to flag until every superstition is as completely banished as St. Patrick is said to have banished the reptiles from Erin.

W. M. KNOX.

MEANING OF THE WORD "RELIGION."

It is perhaps excusable that those who believe, or profess to believe, in theology should wish to appropriate so respectable a word as "religion" as a legitimate perquisite of their faith; but it is rather surprising that educated Secularists should not only allow them to do so, but positively make them a present of it by taking for granted, and even insisting, that the word means not merely duty, but also supernatural belief. If, however, we dissect the word or dig down to its root, we find that the word *religion* is merely another form of the better-understood word *obligation*; both being derivatives of the Latin word *ligature* or *ligament*, which means tie or bond, the syllable *lig* being root or bone of all three words alike, and not only proof of their affinity, but also that this derivation of the word is the correct one. The word "religion" by itself, therefore, means duty—neither more nor less, and has nothing whatever necessarily to do with theologic belief, though the Churches falsely teach that they are inseparable. Now, the only *real* or *practical* duty of man—that is, the only duty of which he *knows*—is right life. If, therefore, the word "religion" stands alone, it means morality—not godliness—contrary as this may be to common understanding of the meaning of the word; and that if we wish to place our meaning of the word beyond dispute or doubt, we must qualify it, and speak of secular or practical religion—that is, of morality, or virtue, or humanity; and of supernatural or theologic religion—that is, of godliness or piety. Doubtless, we usually understand what is meant by such a legend as "Religion and Morality," but such understanding is logically at best only an instinctive and very probable guess; for religion and morality, apart from understood meaning, are one and the same thing, whereas the legend "Theology and morality" would be logically indisputable, and therefore preferable. I am aware that there is high authority for using the word "religion" as synonymous with theologic belief; but authority is the bigot's castle, whilst argument should be the Freethinker's instrument of conviction. Authority, however, is all very well by way of illustration and confirmation of argument; so I will, for these purposes, appeal to authority. Pope, in his well-known lines from the "Essay on Man":

For forms of faith let graceless zealots fight—
His can't be wrong whose life is in the right,

evidently regarded right life—that is, morality or virtue—as a form of faith; that is, a religion. Thomas Paine wrote, "To do good is my religion." Charles Kingsley wrote (in his little niece's album), "Do noble deeds, not dream them." The able and learned author of that splendid book, *Supernatural Religion*, evidently, by the very title of his book, did not regard the word "religion" by itself as synonymous with theologic belief. It would, of course, be the merest pedantry to seriously call attention to the popular but erroneous use of the word "religion," were it also a matter of common knowledge that this popular use of the word, established as it is by long usage, and therefore currently convenient, was not in itself correct, and could only be justified as an understood error; but such understanding is by no means a matter of common knowledge, and those Secularists who do understand the difference between the real and popular use of the word seem quite disposed to surrender the word to their opponents as one of no special value or importance. Even, however, if the word is to be so surrendered, that is no reason why we should not clearly understand its origin and meaning.

W. J. MARSH.

A little Sunday-school girl recited her text as "Many are cold but few frozen."

THE BIBLE-BABEL BLUNDER.

THE primal step to universal peace
 Is that which leads to schools of foreign speech,
 Whence issue minds equipped for war's surcease,
 Prepared by divers tongues all hearts to reach.

Strange speech estranges men with greater bar
 Than climate, river, mountain-range, or sea;
 But arts of peace will leave scant room for war
 When Thought, in common words, evolved shall be.

When all mankind, in one known tongue, shall think,
 Then heart and mind will speak to heart and mind;
 The good of each, the good of all will link;
 And bonds of peace the gladsome earth will bind.

What crimes and vicious virtues have been born
 Of ignorance of symbols of our thought!
 What covenants of friendship have been torn!
 What patriotic murders have been wrought!

Alas! that human speech should not be one;
 But God in heedless haste all language mixed,
 To stop a rising industry begun
 By men whose hearts on heav'n—and bricks—were fixed.

Some Shinar folk, by brickwork, tried to reach
 Earth's concave roof, and thence heaven's convex floor;
 When, somehow, someone sent, by sign or speech,
 The news to God, who diabolical vengeance swore.

What! coming here to sully heav'n with brick!
 We'll see if any builders hither reach.
 Just ope the trap through which I kicked Old Nick!
 I'll journey down and jumble up their speech.

So down he came to view the rising tow'r.
 Said he, "Let none the cursed building touch!"
 Then, strange to say, they all within an hour
 Were jabb'ring Irish, Hebrew, Greek and Dutch!

This gabbling babel soon gave rise to blows;
 Each workman's words were deemed but verbal tricks;
 And when free rend'rings reached a bricklayer's nose,
 He ceased to lay—and took to throwing—bricks.

If God had but foreseen the coming day
 When he a book would write to guide our race,
 He would, no doubt, have tried some other way
 To stop the rise of brickwork into space.

This book he wrote to guide the chosen Jews;
 And, later, meant the book to guide us all,
 Forgetting that all speech he did confuse,
 To limit one dimension of a wall.

To 'stablish diverse tongues, and then to write
 In only one of them a needful guide,
 Was certainly an act of heav'nly spite,
 Or ignorance, forgetfulness or pride.

The book, in many tongues and many climes,
 Has ever sown dissensions, hates, and tears;
 Each boasted precept gendered countless crimes;
 And ev'ry lauded hope unnumbered fears.

Whoe'er will question whomsoe'er he will,
 Will find that each is right, and all are wrong;
 That venom'd contradictions fully fill
 The minds of all the Bible-burdened throng.

If God had known that forty tons will crush
 A foot of bricks and mortar in a wall,
 He ne'er had made his mad linguistic rush,
 But waited for the rising tow'r to fall.

In justice to Jehovah we must state:
 His ignorance need not excite our scorn;
 For science, God and man had both to wait
 Till Newton and Copernicus were born.

G. L. MACKENZIE.

THE BRADLAUGH MEMORIAL FUND.

J. R. Webley, £1 1s.; C. Packford, 2s.; J. Donaldson, £10; collected at S. Standing's lecture at Bradford, 10s. 6d.; A. B. Stewart (Calcutta), £1; F. T. Rayner, £1. Per Angus Thomas (Camberwell Branch): J. Umpleby, £25, and twenty-five fully paid up shares. Per G. W. Foote; X, £15; H. Richardson, £5.—R. FORDEE, sec.

NORTH-EASTERN SECULAR FEDERATION.

IN spite of unfavorable weather, Mr. C. J. Hunt's tour in the north has been highly successful. The tour commenced on April 1, at North Shields, the lecture being delivered in the Spiritualist Hall, Camden-street, the subject being "The History of Priestcraft." On account of the wet weather the audience was not so large as usual, and there was no discussion. On Tuesday, April 2, Mr. Hunt lectured to a very fair audience in the Seamen's Hall, Fowler-street, South Shields. After the lecture he was opposed by a Spiritualist. On Friday, April 3, he journeyed to Middlesborough, and delivered an address in the Cleveland Hall on "Christ or God, Man or Myth." There was a considerable amount of discussion at the close, Mr. Hunt answering the opposition with great ability. April 4 saw Mr. Hunt at Bedlington, where, in spite of the stormy weather, a good audience assembled in the Co-operative Hall to hear Mr. Hunt lecture on "Evolution and Design," Dr. James Trotter being in the chair. Sunday, April 5, was a red-letter day in the history of the Freethought party in Northumberland, from the fact that the first Freethought lecture ever delivered on a Sunday in Blyth took place on that date. Mr. Hunt had been advertised to lecture three times in the Central Hall, but, owing to the bigoted action of the Christian proprietor, the hall was denied Mr. Hunt at the last moment, and the lectures took place in the Theatre Royal. Considerable interest was manifested in the lectures in the district, and in spite of the drenching rain, which continued the whole day, very good audiences assembled to hear Mr. Hunt. Mr. Martin Weatherburn presided at the morning lecture, "Christianity and Secularism"; Mr. J. Brown at the afternoon lecture, "Evolution and Design"; and Mr. Weatherburn at the evening lecture, on "The Christians' Creed." There was only one opponent at the evening lecture, Mr. Hunt's reply gaining the applause of the audience. Wet weather still continuing, the audience that met Mr. Hunt in the Albert Hall, Willington, on April 6, was not as large as had been expected. Mr. Hunt, however, created a great impression by his lecture, "Christ: God, Man, or Myth?" one of the audience joining the local Branch. A good audience assembled in the Central Hall, Spennymoor, on April 7, to hear Mr. Hunt lecture on "Christianity and Secularism." West Auckland was the place on the list for Wednesday, where, in spite of the weather, a very successful meeting was held, Mr. Hunt being opposed by the local Methodist minister. A large and enthusiastic meeting was the result of Mr. Hunt's visit to Annfield Plain (April 9). The lecture, "Christ: God, Man, or Myth?" was delivered in the Theatre Royal, which was kindly granted free by Mr. Jones, the proprietor. A number of persons opposed, Mr. Hunt giving great satisfaction by his able replies. Finer weather met Mr. Hunt on Friday at Newcastle, the consequence being that a good audience assembled in the Irish Literary Institute to hear Mr. Hunt's lecture on "Materialism versus Spiritualism." The local Spiritualists had been invited to be present, and their president, Mr. W. H. Robinson, took the chair. None of the Spiritualists opposed Mr. Hunt, however, and the discussion at the close was confined to a passage of arms between Mr. Hunt and Mr. Ogle, an ex-Spiritualist. A large and somewhat noisy audience assembled to hear Mr. Hunt's lecture on Saturday, April 11, at Chester-le-Street, the subject being "Christianity and Slavery." Some discussion took place at the close, but the opposition was not of a very high order. The tour closed by the three fairly successful lectures on Sunday in the Central Hall, Spennymoor. The subjects were—Morning, "The Christians' Creed"; afternoon, "Free-will and Responsibility"; evening, "Christ: God, Man, or Myth." There is every prospect of a debate being arranged in Spennymoor between Mr. Hunt and Mr. Wise, Christian Evidence lecturer. I beg to acknowledge the following sums to the expenses of Mr. Hunt's tour: Bedlington Branch, 5s.; Chester-le-Street Branch, 14s. 1d.; Crook Branch, 4s. 6d.—JOSEPH BROWN, hon. sec., 86 Durham-street, Bentinck, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND.

J. Kemp, 2s.; Barbados Branch, 10s.; North-West London Branch £2; T. Huband, 4d.; R. Morris, 1s.; J. Marsh, 1s.; A Friend, 1s.—R. FORDEE, sec.

"Lord help me to pray" cried a fervent and long-winded Methodist. "And the Lord help thee to give over," ejaculated a tired listener.

A minister, the other Sunday morning, had preached a very long parched sermon on the creation of man, and one little girl in the congregation was utterly worn out. After the service she said to her mother: "Mamma, were we all made of dust?" "Certainly, my child." "The preacher was too?" "Of course. Why do you think he was not made like the rest of us?" "Oh, because he is so awful dry, mamma. I don't see how the Creator could make him stick together."

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

President, G. W. FOOTE.

PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTS.

SECULARISM teaches that conduct should be based on reason and knowledge. It knows nothing of divine guidance or interference; it excludes supernatural hopes and fears; it regards happiness as man's proper aim, and utility as his moral guide.

Secularism affirms that Progress is only possible through Liberty, which is at once a right and a duty; and therefore seeks to remove every barrier to the fullest equal freedom of thought, action and speech.

Secularism declares that theology is condemned by reason as superstitious and by experience as mischievous, and assails it as the historic enemy of progress.

Secularism accordingly seeks to dispel superstition; to spread education; to disestablish religion; to rationalise morality; to promote peace; to dignify labor; to extend material well-being; and to realise the self-government of the people.

MEMBERSHIP.

Any person is eligible as a member on signing the following declaration:—

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Name

Address

Occupation

Active or Passive

Dated this.....day of.....18

This Declaration should be transmitted to the Secretary with a subscription; and, on admission of the member, a certificate will be issued by the Executive.

The minimum subscription for individual members is one shilling per year; all beyond that amount is optional, every member being left to fix his subscription according to his means and interest in the cause.

Members are classed as *active* or *passive*. *Passive* members are those who cannot allow their names to be published. *Active* members are those who do not object to the publication of their names, and are ready to co-operate openly in the Society's work.

Fill up the above form and forward it, with subscription (as much, or as little, as you think just to yourself and the cause), to Mr. R. Forder, sec., 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.; or to a local Branch Secretary.

SUNDAY MEETINGS.

[Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on post-card.]

LONDON.

- Ball's Pond Secular Hall, 36 Newington Green Road, N.: 7 Mr. P. Millar, "What has Christianity Done for Woman?"
- Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.30, Mr. Nelson Palmer, "The Workers' Political Programme."
- Monday, at 8, social gathering. Wednesday, at 8, dramatic class.
- Thursday, at 8, committee meeting.
- Bethnal Green Branch N. S. S.—"The Monarch" Coffee House, 166 Bethnal Green Road, E.: 7.30, Mr. W. Heaford, "The Holy Book: is it True?" Admission free, discussion challenged.
- Camberwell—61 New Church Road, S.E.: 4.30, quarterly meeting; 6, tea; 7, entertainment (members 6d., public 9d.).
- Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C.: 7, Mr. J. M. Robertson, "Christianity and the Social Question."
- Hammersmith—Hammersmith Club, Grove House, 1 The Grove, Broadway: Thursday, at 8, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "Christianity and Slavery."
- Leyton—Mr. Beadle's, 10 Daisey Villas, Manor Road: 7, Mr. Bird, a reading. A business meeting after the reading.
- Milton Hall, Kentish Town Road, N.W.: 7, Orchestral Band; 7.30, Mr. Albert Tarn, "Anarchism: its Aim and Methods."
- Monday, at 8.30, social meeting. Tuesday, at 8, singing and dramatic classes (practice).
- Notting Hill Gate—"Duke of York," Kensington Place: 8, general meeting.
- West Ham—Secular Hall, 121 Broadway, Plaistow: 7, Rev. S. D. Headlam, "Popular Errors Concerning the Church of England."
- West London—8 Norland Road North: Monday, at 8, Mutual Improvement Class, Mr. F. Henley, "Continuous Parliaments."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

- Battersea Park Gates: 11.15, Mr. W. Heaford, "What is Secularism?"
- Bethnal Green—Opposite St. John's Church: 11.15, a lecture.

- Camberwell—Station Road: 11.30; Mr. J. Rowney, "The Creation Story."
- Edmonton—Corner of Angel Road: 3.30, Mr. J. Fagan, "A Bible Criticism."
- Finsbury Park (near the band-stand): Mr. Sam Standing, 11.30, "God and his Kings"; 3.30, "The Dignity of Secularism."
- Hammersmith Bridge (Middlesex side): 6.30, Mr. W. J. Ramsey, "How Christianity has Cursed the World."
- Hyde Park, near Marble Arch: 11.30, Mr. W. J. Ramsey, "Christ's Moral Fables."
- Kilburn—Salisbury Road (close to Queen's Park Station): 6.30, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "Design in Nature."
- Mile End Waste: 11.30, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "Design in Nature."
- Old Pimlico Pier: 11.30, Mr. F. Haslam, "Secularism versus Christianity."
- Tottenham—Corner of West Green Road: 3.0, Mr. S. Soddy, "The Confusion of Tongues."
- Victoria Park, near the fountain: 3.30, a lecture.
- Wood Green—Jolly Butcher's Hill: 11.30, Mr. S. Soddy, "Morality in the Middle Ages."

COUNTRY.

- Belfast—St. Anne's Hall, Donegall Street (opposite Turkish Baths): Saturday, April 18, at 8, Mr. G. W. Foote, "Oration on Charles Bradlaugh." Sunday, April 19, Mr. G. W. Foote, 11.30 "The Fear of Death"; 3, "Did the Miracles of the New Testament Ever Happen?"; 7, "A World Without God."
- Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, Cambridge Street: Mr. A. B. Moss, 11, "What do Christians Believe?"; 7, "The Triumph of Secularism."
- Crook—35 Gladstone Terrace, Sunnyside, Tow Law: 6.30, Mr. John Robinson, "The Great French Revolution: its Causes."
- Glasgow—Albion Hall, College Street: 12 noon, debating class, Mr. D. Lindsay, "Liberty"; 6.30, Mr. R. Harper, "Moral Salvation."
- Huddersfield—Friendly and Trades Societies' Hall, Northumberland Street: 8, important business meeting.
- Liverpool—Camden Hall, Camden Street: 11, Tontine Society; 3, discussion class; 7, Mr. Doeg, "Old Testament Difficulties—a Reply."
- Manchester N. S. S., Secular Hall, Rusholme Road, Oxford Road, All Saints': Mr. John Grange, 11, "Charles Bradlaugh, the Modern Martyr to Freedom"; 6.30, "An Analysis of Scientific Theism."
- Newcastle-on-Tyne Branch N. S. S.—4 Hall's Court, Newgate Street: 7.30, Mr. Bowen, "Design in Nature."
- Nottingham—Secular Hall, Beck Street: 7, debate between Mr. J. Hooper and Mr. W. H. Hofmeyer on "Is the Bible True?" (concluded).
- Portsmouth—Wellington Hall, Wellington Street, Southsea: 3, debating class, "Atheism v. Agnosticism?"; 7, Mr. Skipton.
- Reading—"The Fox," Oxford Road, 7, special meeting of members, important business.
- Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham Street: 7, a lecture or reading.
- South Shields—Capt. Duncan's Navigation School, King Street: 7, secretary's annual report.
- Spennymoor—Victoria Hall, Dundas Street: 6, Mr. T. Phillips, a reading.
- Sunderland—Co-operative Hall, Green Street: Mr. Touzeau Parris, 11, "Christian Symbols of Pagan Origin"; 3, "Why I am Not a Christian"; 7, "Jesus Christ, neither Man nor God."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

- Manchester—At the corner of Denmark Road and Oxford Road: 3, Mr. John Grange, "Moses v. Darwin; or the Crumbling of Creeds." In the case of unfavorable weather this lecture will be delivered in the Secular Hall, as above.

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

- ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Creden Road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—April 19, morning and evening, Birmingham; afternoon, Wolverhampton; 26, evening, Hall of Science. May 3, morning, Clerkenwell; 10, morning, Bethnal Green; afternoon, Victoria Park; 17, morning, Westminster; 24, morning, Kingsland; afternoon, Victoria Park; 31, morning, Battersea, June 7, morning, Clerkenwell; afternoon, Victoria Park; 14, morning, Woolwich.
- C. J. HUNT, 48 Fordingley Road, St. Peter's Park, London, W.—April 19, morning, Mile End; 26, morning, Hyde Park; afternoon, Finsbury Park; evening, Woolwich. May 3, morning, Kingsland Green; afternoon, Regent's Park; 10, morning, Pimlico; evening, Kilburn; 17, morning, Clerkenwell; evening, Battersea; 24, morning, Hyde Park; evening, Hammersmith; 31, morning, Camberwell; evening, Lambeth.

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