

The Free Thinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.

LONG FACES.

EVERY one who has turned over old volumes of sermons, adorned with the authors' portraits, must have been struck with the length of their faces. They seem to say—parodying the famous line of Dante—"Abandon jokes all ye who enter here." Those men preached a solemnly absurd creed, and they looked absurdly solemn. Their faces seemed as devoid of merriment as the faces of jackasses, and the heads above them were often as stupid. Justice forbid that I should run down a Hooker, a Barrow, a Taylor, or a South. They were men of *genius*, and all *genius* is of the blood royal. I read their writings with pleasure and profit, which is more than nine-tenths of the clergy can say with any approach to honesty. But a single swallow does not make a summer, and a few men of *genius* do not elevate a profession. I am perfectly convinced that the great bulk of the preaching fraternity have cultivated a solemn aspect—not perhaps deliberately, but at least instinctively—in order to impose on the ignorant and credulous multitude. The very tone of voice in which they pray, give out hymns, and preach, is *artificial*; in keeping with their artificial ideas and artificial sentiments; which, if they were expressed in natural tones, would excite universal contempt and derision.

Now this solemnity is the best trick in the priest's game. Gravity is always mistaken by the multitude for wisdom. A round-faced merry fellow shall make a bright, sensible speech, and he will be voted frivolous; but a long-faced, saturnine fellow shall utter a string of dull platitudes, and he will be voted a Solon. This is well-known to the clergy, who have developed a perfect art of dullness. They talk an infinite deal of nothing, use a multitude of solemn words to hide an absurdity or no meaning at all, and utter the inherited shibboleths of their craft like the august oracles of a recent revelation.

Concede them the advantage of solemnity, or reverence, or whatever else it is called, and you give them the victory at the beginning of the battle. If you pull a long face over their nonsense, the spectators, after all your arguments, will say, "There *must* be something in it, though, for see how *serious* he is." Whereas a light jest and a merry smile will show you are heart-free, and beyond the range of clerical artillery.

I do not pretend, however, that the efforts of Free-thought critics should have no background of seriousness. Wit without reason, says Heine, is but a sneeze of the intelligence. But has not wit ever been the keenest weapon of the great emancipators of the human mind? Not the mere plaything of an idle mind in an idle hour, but the coruscating blade to pierce the weak places of folly and imposture. Aristophanes, Lucian, Rabelais, Erasmus, and Voltaire—to take a few great instances—were all serious in aim and intention. They valued truth, goodness, and beauty, as much as the dreariest preachers. But

they felt, because of their temperament, that while the dry light of the intellect is suited to the study of science, it is inadequate in the realm of political, social, and religious debate, where everything is steeped in feeling, and hopes and fears strive together, and imagination kindles the very senses into keener play.

After all, perhaps, this word *temperament* is a solution in itself. When Bishop South was taken to task by a brother Bishop for his witticisms, he replied, "Do you mean to say that if God had given you any wit you would not have used it?" Thus is wisdom justified of her children.

My friendly though severe critic, Dr. Coit, who recently discoursed at South-place Institute (or is it Chapel?) on the National Secular Society in general and myself in particular, could hardly deny that Voltaire was a master of wit, sarcasm, irony, and ridicule. Well, now, let us see what some serious writers have said of this nimble spirit. Robert Browning, in *The Two Poets of Croisic*, thus salutes him:—

Ay, sharpest shrewdest steel that ever stabbed
To death Imposture through the armor-joints!

Carlyle says "He gave the death-stab to modern superstition," and "it was a most weighty service." Buckle says he "used ridicule, not as the test of truth, but as the scourge of folly," and thus "produced more effect than the gravest arguments could have done." "Nor can any one since the days of Luther be named," says Brougham, "to whom the spirit of free inquiry, nay, the emancipation of the human mind from spiritual tyranny, owes a more lasting debt of gratitude."

There is a story of the manuscript of Harrington's *Oceana* being filched and given to Cromwell, and the sagacious "usurper" returned it saying, "My government is not to be overturned with paper pellets." But the ironical pamphlet, *Killing no Murder*, produced a different effect. Nor did the royal and imperial despots, and their priestly abettors, in the eighteenth century, dread the solemn lovers of freedom. But the winged pen of Voltaire was a different matter. "Bigots and tyrants," says Macaulay, "who had never been moved by the wailing and cursing of millions, turned pale at his name."

If Dr. Coit imagines that Voltaire has lost his influence in France, I venture to say he is mistaken. The hand of Voltaire is on Rénan, and on dozens of living soldiers in the French army of progress. And what man of letters in England—a country abounding in "the oxen of the gods," strong, slow, and stupid—is free from his influence? Carlyle's early essay on Voltaire is a mixture of hatred and admiration. But read the Life of Frederick, and see how the French snake fascinates the Scotch Puritan, until at last he flings every reservation aside, and hails with glowing panegyric the Savior of Calas.

Let me refer Dr. Coit to the delightful preface of a delightful book—Leland's introduction to his fine translation of Heine's *Reisebilder*. "Woe to those who are standing near," says Leland, "when a

humorist of this stamp is turned loose upon the world. He knows nothing of your old laws,—like an Azrael-Napoleon he advances conscienceless, feeling nothing but an overpowering impulse, as of some higher power which bids him strike and spare not." But, after all, the main cause of progress is *agitation*, and though the agitation may be "eminently disagreeable to many, even friends, who are brought within its immediate action, it will be eminently beneficial in the end."

Yes, the hard-bound human mind, like the hard-bound soil, has to be ploughed up. Let it shriek as it will, the work must be done, or the light and air will never penetrate, and an ocean of seeds will lie barren on the surface.

Dr. Coit need not fear that ridicule will excite apprehensions about the multiplication table. Ridicule has a fine scent for its proper prey. It must detect the *ridiculous* before it couches and springs. Truth, honor, consistency, disinterestedness, are invulnerable. What ridicule can kill deserves to die.

Mr. George Meredith writes of "that first-born of common-sense, the vigilant Comic, which is the genius of thoughtful laughter." Folly is the natural prey of this hunter, and Folly is found in the churches as well as in the streets. Some men, however, are non-laughers by birthright, and as men are apt to make a virtue of their deficiencies, it is not surprising if, as Mr. Meredith observes, the "laughter-hater soon learns to dignify this dislike as an objection in morality."

Persons who have read the *Freethinker* from the first do not need to be assured of the earnest spirit of its conductors. They fight no less sternly for the iridescent jewels in their swords. But Dr. Coit appears to object to fighting altogether. He seems to bid us rest content with what we have won. That is, he bids us leave superstition, with all its brood of lies and wrongs, in possession of the schools, the universities, the churches, the hospitals, the workhouses, and every other institution. He bids us leave it with its large grasp on the private and public life of the community, and go on with our constructive work in face of all this overwhelming frustration. No doubt he means well, but we are not foolish enough to take his advice. We tell Dr. Coit that he does not understand the obstructive power of theology, and that he is thus unable to appreciate the work of the National Secular Society.

Here, for instance, are the Blasphemy Laws, robbing us of the common rights of citizenship, forbidding us to receive dead men's money, or to hold any kind of property. General Booth complains of having to pay legacy duty on £70,000. Our complaint is that we have to forfeit every penny. And how is it possible to carry on constructive work without a local habitation as well as a name? We *must* have command of our own premises, and security for our funds, before we can engage in far-reaching enterprises. When we are in that position we shall be very cold and slothful if we do not eclipse the constructive efforts of South Place Institute.

But let us return to the point of ridicule, and the point of "blasphemy." Dr. Coit found two "lessons for the day" in my *Philosophy of Secularism*, and he spoke of my *Shadow of the Sword* as "a noble plea for peace." But he complained of my exposing the absurdities and immoralities of the Bible—a book which is thrust into the hands of little children in our public schools. He also complained of my dragging to light the Crimes of Christianity. But his anger was most excited by one of my "Bible Romances"—*A Virgin Mother*. Some fastidious persons even object to the title, thus showing their abysmal ignorance of Christian literature. The phrase is common in Catholic books of devotion, like the *Mother of God*. It occurs in Milton's *Ode on the Nativity* and in *Paradise Lost*. I have marked it

a dozen times in Professor Palgrave's collection of *Sacred Songs*. But Dr. Coit objects to my comparison of the Holy Ghost's "overshadowing" of the Virgin Mary with the divine impregnations of earthly women by the gods of the Greek pantheon. He regards the one as a "mystery" and the others as vulgar amours. But this depends on your point of view. Lord Bacon found a mine of hidden wisdom in some of these "amours," and Mr. Morris makes beautiful poetry of the loves of Zeus and Danae, which is more than any one has ever succeeded in doing with the relations between the Holy Ghost and Mary. I admit, however, that taste is not disputable; and I refer Dr. Coit to the passage of my *Virgin Mother* in which I cite Justin Martyr as appealing to the Pagans not to mock at the Incarnation, on the express ground that they also taught the same doctrine in their stories of the demi-gods who were born of women after the embraces of deities. Surely, then, it is idle to complain of my disrespect of this Christian dogma. Nor is it just to say that my criticism of it cannot be read to a mixed audience. That is the fault of the *doctrine*. So far as my *words* go, there is not a syllable to shock any but a prurient modesty.

With respect to Dr. Coit's plea for bringing the kindness of social intercourse into the war of ideas, I have this to say—It is impossible. Timid persons have always sighed for this policy, but when the fight began they have found themselves "between the fell incensed points of mighty opposites." Religion should be treated as freely as other subjects. That is all I claim, and I will not be satisfied with less. I cannot consent to relinquish any weapon that is legitimate in other warfare. Nor for the sake of temporary *feeling* will I be false to the permanent *interests* of my species. I will laugh at folly, scorn hypocrisy, expose falsehood, and bathe my sword in the heart's blood of imposture. But I will not descend to personalities. I do not war with *persons*, but with *principles*.

Ten years have rolled by since I issued the first number of this journal, and my ten years' work must speak for itself. My object is to destroy the Christian superstition and prepare the way for a more rational and humane condition of society. I shall adapt myself, as well as I can, to the shifting conditions of the struggle. My aim is to *succeed*. My policy, therefore, will never be determined by a personal preference. I shall follow the path that promises victory. But I do not, and will not, dictate to others. Within the scope of our principles there is room for many policies. Let each do his best, according to his light and opportunity. Let Dr. Coit, too, go his way as I go mine. We travel by different routes, but perhaps we shall meet at the goal.

G. W. FOOTE.

IRELAND AND THE IRISH.

ONE cannot take even a flying visit to the Emerald Isle without reconsidering those problems of race and religion affecting the nation so closely linked with, yet so alien to England. The Irish have so many admirable qualities; they are so generous and devoted to their country, their faith, and their kindred, that the problem, why they are so backward in some of the leading features of the world's civilization, is forced upon one's attention. Especially is this the case when we contrast the poverty and beggary of the South and West with the industry and prosperity of Ulster. Even in Belfast, which in 1821 had but 37,000 inhabitants, and which the new census will probably show to be considerably ahead of Dublin in point of numbers, while the South and West have actually been diminishing during the past half century, we find two races, with two religions, side by side, the one occupying almost all

the fine streets and houses, the other in the poorest and most squalid quarters. We find even in Ulster a population intelligent and industrious, and another who will not dig and to beg are not ashamed. To refer this to race is but little better than another way of stating the fact which requires explanation. Variety of race is one of the chief factors of progress. While indubitably there is a predominance of the Celtic element among the Irish—as of the Saxon among the English—there is much to be said for the one being as varied and progressive as the other.

Noticing where the bogs and beggars, rags and ruins abound, I cannot avoid the reflection that religion is largely responsible. English rule and Protestant oppression may be responsible for much, yet I think every fair-minded observer will allow that the backwardness of parts of Ireland is mainly due to the people's own lack of education and energy. I cannot resist the inference that the want of forethought and application, exemplified in lands uncultivated or poorly cultivated, with a never-varying crop of potatoes, are the result of their religious training. They are told to look forward to another and a better world. Every improvement they make in this one tells only to the advantage of the Church. If the landlord gets less, the tenant is no better off, for the Church gets more. The priest desires no education that may lessen his influence. Hence, though the system of national education has been sixty years in operation, there is still a large proportion of illiterate voters. The priests wish all education to be under sacerdotal influence, and have done their best to break down the model schools of mixed Protestants and Catholics. Their motto virtually is, "Have our education or none." They teach, "increase and multiply." They want numbers, even though this involves squalor. Every family hopes to have one son a priest. For this one the prospects of the others are sacrificed; and the flower of the flock being a celibate, the race is constantly deteriorated, while the caste remains slightly superior to the average of the race. Poverty is enhanced by having so large a population of the unproductive classes: priests, policemen, and soldiers. The only remedy offered by the priests for poverty is the Christian treatment of almsgiving, which tends to spread and perpetuate the disease; and this vicious virtue of charity is cultivated to the extent of repressing more scientific methods of dealing with the problem. To me it seems the great want of Ireland is compulsory education. This will be a more powerful lever to uplift the people than even the political and social reforms she is fast attaining.

I do not write here as a politician, though I have strong sympathy with the spirit of nationality which the Irish everywhere cherish. But English politicians so resolutely shut their eyes to the central undeniable fact that there is a religious problem in Ireland, that those might be excused who would force it upon attention. Certainly English efforts in the past to drag the Irish into Anglican Protestantism have been monuments of revolting stupidity and oppression, of which the mass of Englishmen are so ashamed that they forbear to mention that the initiative to English ascendancy was given by Pope Adrian IV., while Alexander III. distinctly recognised it; and John XXII., a hundred and sixty years afterwards, refers to it in his brief address to Edward II.*

Protestant persecution has but served to cement Catholicism. It is bound up with all their ideas of home and nationality. Catholicism is so strong just because it has been so persecuted. Liberty will prove a more powerful solvent than oppression. Political freedom, so hard to achieve by a nation sunk in intellectual bondage, will react in the interest of religious freedom. Ireland is at once the delight and the difficulty of the

Papacy. As a solid Catholic mass in a Protestant kingdom, it always holds out hopes of the reconquest of the rest, and its disaffection can be used as a weapon when Rome has anything to gain. But the policy of Rome has never been the encouragement of political freethought and progress, or the emancipation of Ireland from English rule. It has rather been to keep it as a permanent menace. The Papacy can never afford to break with the British Government, which touches it in so many quarters, and when anything is to be gained elsewhere it will readily sacrifice the interest of Ireland, just as it sold it at first for Peter's pence, and yet again for Catholic emancipation. The mission of Monsignor Persico, followed by the Papal rescript against the Plan of Campaign, opened the eyes of many that, while complaining of being ruled from Westminster, they might be quite as effectually ruled from Rome.

The Irish priests were never so popular as recently. Bred from the people and sharing their aspirations, naturally resenting Protestant rule, they keep the repute of being the most devoted of patriots, while hindering the people from breaking loose from their control. Yet the allegiance of the Irish priest is due, not primarily to his country, but to Rome. Were Home Rule achieved this would be more clearly seen. Instead of being leaders in Radical politics, they would be forced to a Conservative attitude.

There are signs that the political education which the Irish have been receiving is bearing its fruit. The Parnell case has done more to challenge the authority of the priests than all the Freethinkers of England could do. The best chance of undermining their position lies in their being mixed up with political strife. They cannot act as mere electioneering agents without exciting the question of the more independent. It is true that at present among good Catholics absolute submission in spiritual affairs is combined with resolute insubordination in temporal matters. And this compromise may last for long. But once a priest-ridden people is led to question the authority of their guides and to use their own minds on their own problems, the initial step is taken. The great difficulty with such people is to teach them to think. This once attained, they will gradually shake off their "old men of the sea." We discern, too, in Ulster, a cloud no bigger than a man's hand, a few resolute Freethinkers who regard the Christian strife of Orangemen and Catholics with equal disgust, who say, "A plague on both your houses," and who persistently call attention to the fact that people must work out their own practical secular salvation. The task of secularising Ireland is a big one. But the work has been well begun, and will not drop. The cause of freedom is one in which persistency means victory.

J. M. WHEELER.

PRESIDENTIAL NOTES.

As President of the National Secular Society I have not thought it necessary to spend any time in writing letters to Mr. Waugh and the Bishop of Chester. Pious libels on Secularists are neither killed nor scotched in that way. It is utterly useless to appeal to the libellers' sense of honor, for they have none so far as their creed is concerned. I have taken a different course. Dr. Jayne's libel was perpetrated at Chester, and I have resolved to answer him before a Chester audience. A few friends in that city have engaged the Corn Exchange for me, and I shall lecture on "Secularism and Cruelty" in reply to the Bishop. The date of the lecture is Friday, May 15, two days before the N. S. S. Conference.

I told the Chester friends that they might throw the hall open *free*, if they thought it would secure a better meeting, and I would be responsible for all the expenses. But they prefer to make a charge, and

* See Cardinal Newman's *Historical Sketches*, vol. iii., p. 257.

they are the best judges of the local circumstances. As it is, I shall have to travel from London specially for this meeting, and I do not suppose the takings will defray all the local expenses and my own too. An old friend of mine and the movement, Mr. W. Hunt, handed me a guinea on Sunday evening, and if any other friends wish to contribute they can send direct to me. If there is any surplus, when I make up the account, I propose to hand it over to the Chester Branch of the N. S. S. which I shall try to form after the lecture and discussion. It will enable the new Branch to start with hope and courage. If I cannot form a Branch on the spot, I will devote the surplus to some other Fund, or keep it till the Branch is started, and hand it over then.

I once more appeal to the Branches of the N. S. S., and to its individual members, to make the Birmingham Conference a success. The *agenda* is a long one, containing matters of deep interest, which should be adequately discussed before they are voted upon.

Owing to the Town Hall being closed for repairs, another hall has been secured for the public meeting at night. The Exchange Assembly Room is in New-street, and will seat nearly 600 people, with standing room for more.

The Bradlaugh Memorial Hall Company's directors held their first meeting on Friday, May 1. They elected me as Chairman until the first meeting of shareholders, which must be called within six months of registration. The printing of prospectuses was ordered, and these are now in circulation. Mr. R. Forder acts as secretary *pro tem.*, and will be happy to supply application forms for shares.

Those who have Collecting Cards for the Bradlaugh Memorial Fund should return them with a remittance for the amount collected, to Mr. Forder, who will forward fresh cards to all who can make use of them. The Committee will require to know what sum can be calculated upon before coming to any fresh decisions.

Some months ago I announced that I expected to be able to hand over the sum of £100 to the N. S. S. on behalf of a deceased member of the Society. I have now paid the amount to the treasurer, Mr. W. H. Reynolds. It will go into the next year's financial account. This year's is flourishing enough without it.

These are the last Presidential Notes I shall write before the Birmingham Conference. Whether I write any after it will of course "depend." I find the presidential duties a heavy tax on my time, my energy, and my pocket. But I do not mean to turn back, and I shall stand for re-election. If the National Secular Society wants me to continue in office—which, of course, it may not—it will have to take me as I am. I cannot remake myself, and I do not intend to try. I believe my temper is far from despotic, but I know my own mind for all that, and I mean to carry out my ideas if I can. To do this I desire no instrument but persuasion, and if I succeed it is idle to complain. Those who imagine (their number is not great) that I am likely to be blown off my track by temporary gusts of dissent do not know me as well as I think I know myself. While I am President I will listen to any member's counsel or complaint, but I will form my own judgment and stand by it; and when I am not wanted on the captain's bridge I will step down with alacrity and give place to a preferable man.

This, at any rate, I am persuaded of, that a party like ours will never succeed without discipline. Whether it be Mr. Bradlaugh's method, or my

method, or another man's method, unity of action can only flow from unity of design. All history shows us, too, that leadership is indispensable. Abolish responsible power, and you only get irresponsible power. In my younger days I thought otherwise. I believed in "parliamentarism" pure and simple. But age has brought experience, and I hope wisdom, and I see that some kind of subordination—perfectly voluntary, and therefore perfectly honorable—is necessary to the success of every enterprise.

I see this, too, which many people do not see, though it is so obvious. You cannot have the advantages of *all* policies *at once*. Selection also means rejection. If you choose one road, you reject the rest. And what this involves, in the business of the N. S. S., I leave to the sagacity of its members.

G. W. FOOTE.

ACID DROPS.

Mr. Goschen's promised dishing of the Liberals by the introduction of Free Education has much fluttered the religious doves. Mr. Sydney Herbert, on behalf of the Government, has given assurances that "the principal object will be to secure the position of the voluntary schools." Under these circumstances the Church papers, who have hitherto vehemently denounced the project of Free Education, are coming round to the view that it had better be accepted from Lord Salisbury's Government, lest a worst thing shall befall them. And a worst thing will befall them. The Government Bill will no doubt be drawn up in the interest of the Church, but in the long run it will be found that those who pay must govern, and all schools will eventually be put under popular control. For our part we shall watch narrowly the attempt at a new State endowment of dogma, and never rest till the children are liberated from the tyranny of priestcraft and superstition.

There was a rare assembly of sharps and flats at the Mansion House last week. The Lord Mayor issued a special investigation to the Prophecy Investigation Society, and in an introductory address, spoke of the benefits to be derived from the study of prophecy—which, by the way, Bishop South said either found a man cracked or left him so. But the Lord Mayor is better acquainted with the sermons of Mr. Spurgeon than of Bishop South, though he might plagiarise from the latter both with more credit and more impunity. The Rev. H. W. Peplow declared that "true advance in the spiritual life was only to be secured from the study of prophecy." If, as Hosea said (ix., 7), "the prophet is a fool, the spiritual man is mad," we daresay he is correct. Mr. Pember, another leading light of the P. I. Society, addressed himself to the momentous question, Will the coming of Christ be pre-millennial or post-millennial?

The *Daily News*, commenting on the P. I. Society, says: "For a century past, to go no further back, the Beast has been threatening mankind by chapter and verse, yet nothing has come of it. It is evident that some people make a very good living out of the Book of Daniel, as others flourish on the search for the Lost Tribes. Many and many an honest family has been brought up on that sacred work. It has apprenticed the boys, found marriage portions for the daughters, and taken all of them to the seaside once a year. In the old days there was a school of prophets; in ours, as befits a commercial epoch, there is a trade. The Society will, no doubt, leave the trade to Old Moore and Zadkiel, and will bring us back to the habit of disinterested investigation in a matter of great practical concern."

It is the fashion in towns to say that Hodge is a faithful son of the Church. In north-west Suffolk he is the parson's more or less—usually less—avowed enemy. It is almost startling to observe how when unmoved by appeals to him on other questions, Hodge will become wide-awake and even excited when clerical dictation, pretensions, and affectations of unquestionable wisdom are brought into the discussion. Clerical hostility to free education and clerical obstruction in the matter of allotments have strengthened the laborer's hostility to the Church.

The *Kensington News* complains that Freethought is "becoming more aggressive," all because handbills of Mr. Foote's lecture on "Heaven and Hell" were distributed in the streets on Sunday. Our aggrieved contemporary may rely on it that Freethought will not drop such "aggression." Christian tract-distributors don't pay more than their share for paving the streets.

Monsignor Gilbert, a Catholic luminary shining at Westminster with the full force of a mediæval candle, warns the world against "secular and godless education," which will surely lead to "irreligion, infidelity, immorality, crime, secret societies, and murders." This is a very funny catalogue. It reminds us of the famous classification of animals as men, horses, quadrupeds, and ponies. But the "secret societies" bit is the funniest of all. It is precisely in Catholic countries that these pests are found. The Italian desperadoes who were lynched at New Orleans were all good Catholics, and were buried with the full rites of the Catholic Church.

After a case that was before one of the magistrates on Saturday, Mr. Waugh will perhaps modify his opinion—for accepting which the Bishop of Chester found himself in hot water the other day—that religious agnosticism and cruelty to children are convertible terms. In the case in question, Mr. Waugh had rescued a child from a father who had maltreated it. But the child has now been restored by the magistrate's order to the father, who, it seems, is "a man of strong religious and moral convictions, and thought he was doing right"—in beating the child mercilessly. This man is not exceptional. Half, at least, of the cruelty, and bullying in scholastic and domestic circles is done, we suspect, by those who have or affect high moral and religious grounds for their cruelty.—*Pall Mall Gazette*.

According to the *Manchester Guardian*, the Bishop of Chester has been addressing a lot of boys on the benefit of corporal punishment. His lordship went so far as to say that if he were called upon to write a headline for a copybook, he would inscribe, "No birch, no boy. No cane, no character." And this apostle of "whacky-whacky-whack" is the person who has the insolence to charge Secularists with ill-treating their children.

We should like to hear Ingersoll on Dr. Jayne. What an object the Colonel would make of this boy-beater! Ingersoll adores children. He has been known to leave a wealthy client cooling his heels while he ran out of the office to pick up a child who had tumbled down in the street. He has nursed a poor woman's cross baby in the train while the tired mother took a sleep, and "Bob" got the baby "off" when the mother couldn't. Yes, Ingersoll is the man to pulverise the moral code of Dr. Jayne.

The Protestant Churchman's Association had a rather lively meeting under the presidency of Lord Grimthorpe. Strong protests were made against the new brotherhoods as an episcopal establishment of monkery. Lord Grimthorpe sensibly advocated the use of ridicule against sacerdotal pretensions, though we do not know how he would relish it as applied to Evangelicalism. Of fasting communion, etc., he said, "The right way is to laugh at such nonsense, and not pretend they were solemn. Exactly what we say of religious pretensions altogether."

The Vicar of York, in his speech, illustrated this sentiment by ridiculing the Reconciliation Service got up at St. Paul's after the suicide of poor Easton. He said, "The Chancellor invented it, the Registrar gabbled it over, and the Bishop, like Professor Jowett when he signed the Articles, said, 'give me a pen' and signed it, and the thing was done and the building was reconciled. If they could get any one to stain St. Paul's with blood, they would have, instead of the house-maid, Dr. Tristram and the Bishop of London." These hits were much relished by an Exeter Hall audience, who would doubtless deplore the mocking spirit of infidelity.

The Bishop of Gloucester spoke bitterly on the evils of gambling, although his apostolical predecessors first made up their quorum of a round dozen by drawing lots. But Dr. Ellicott says, like the Jesuits, *distinguo*. "I draw a distinction between slight betting for amusement, and betting in a reckless manner for covetousness sake." In other words,

when my aristocratic friends back their horses, speculate on the Stock Exchange, or put on a little at baccarat, I say nothing; but the poor man who tries to add a little excitement to his life of drudgery, should be "run in" and severely sentenced.

The *Church Times* laments that the ordination service is so long that when there are a number of candidates for the ministry they are not released till well on in the afternoon. Perhaps the reader does not see where the grievance lies. It is here. Pious candidates will not mix the holy communion with any other food in their stomachs, so have to undergo their ordination fasting. Surely the bishops ought to get up early and hurry the proceedings through as quickly as possible.

The Rev. A. V. Stanton, of St. Alban's, Holborn, is a very popular man. But the Rev. Mr. Streeten lets out the secret of Mr. Stanton's popularity. He heard that even policemen were attracted to Mr. Stanton's church, and, asking how it was done, was told he got them to evening meetings and then sang comic songs to them. Why not comic songs as an aid to Christianity, as well as brass bands, banners, music, flowers and candles?

The celebration of the Jewish Passover in Paris has again called attention to their divine method of slaughtering animals. The Paris Council sees no reason why the Jewish butchers should not be subject to the same restrictions as others.

An explosion of a powder magazine takes place in Rome and damages some of the Papal buildings. Instantly the faithful in all lands are asked to contribute for the repairs, the expenses of which will probably be defrayed by the Italian Government. Like those Jews who are said to enrich themselves by fires and bankruptcies, the Pope knows how to find his account in a disaster.

"Ripening for eternal damnation" is a good phrase. We take it from a letter written by the Rev. H. J. Alcock, of Willington Vicarage, Salop, in reply to one of our readers who ventured to criticise his sermons. Parson Alcock winds up his elegant epistle in this way:—"I am beginning to fear you have sinned the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost, and are left to Satan to ripen for eternal damnation." This is rather rough on the lay critic. But Parson Alcock has no bowels of compassion. Although his correspondent is going to hell, he does not sign himself "yours sorrowfully," but "yours etc." Yes, Parson Alcock is one who bears his neighbor's troubles like a Christian.

A year or two ago we exposed the shabby tactics of the Rev. P. B. Power, one of the tract-writers for the Religious Tract Society, who lives at West Hill, Richmond. But we find the reverend fabler is still at it. One of our readers asked him for the particulars of his tract "She Pinned Him Tight," in which the story is told of an old woman who routed an infidel lecturer, and the worthy Power replied that time, place, etc., are "not necessary to the truth of a narrative." Of course not. Who said they were? But they are necessary to its *substantiation*. Fancy the worthy Power in the witness-box, refusing to give time, place, etc., on the ground that they were unessential! Wouldn't the judge make him out with it, or commit him for contempt of court?

Parson Power says, "I keep a book of anecdotes, derived from various sources." And this little book of anecdotes he uses up in leaflets, for the Religious Tract Society, which is to be congratulated on having such an industrious, unscrupulous, anecdotal scavenger in its retinue.

The influenza epidemic though its worst ravages are for the present in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire, is of an even more fatal character than the visitation of Providence last year. In Sheffield the deaths rose last week to the enormous total of 703 per thousand.

Dr. Magee, who has been carried off by the epidemic prevailing in Yorkshire, so soon after his elevation to the Archbishopric of York, was an eloquent man, zealous for the Church and its privileges, yet able to see what was and was not defensible. His admission that the Sermon on the Mount could not be put in practice by the State was very

characteristic, though very damaging to Christianity. We doubt if the Church has as able and popular a bishop to put in his place.

The Rev. Dr. A. J. Harrison has been delivering some very nebulous lectures at Newcastle. One thing is most apparent, however. Dr. Harrison has outgrown the creed of the very Church whose pay he takes. He repudiates the doctrine of everlasting punishment, which is taught in the New Testament, if words have any honest meaning; and he says that unbelievers may go to heaven, which is plainly denied in the Thirty-nine Articles. We respect Dr. Harrison for his tolerance and courtesy, but he is not teaching the doctrines he subscribed when he entered a Church pulpit.

Dr. Parker has been telling the Newcastle people that he could not work with Mr. John Morley on the Liberation Society. Both of them want to disestablish the Church of England, but Dr. Parker goes on his knees and Mr. Morley has too much respect for his trousers. Hence their political co-operation is impossible. Well, we daresay Mr. Morley will bear up somehow.

Dr. Parker has also been holding forth on "the Larger Hope." He wants to cool hell down and shorten it a bit. His utterances have excited a good deal of correspondence in the Newcastle press, one of the longest and best letters being from the pen of our friend Joseph Brown.

The divorce case of Taplin *v.* Taplin is spicy reading. The husband seems to have been remarkably fond of *prayer-meetings* as well as other things. We commend the case to the attention of Dr. Jayne.

What an unctuous letter is the one written by Mr. De Cobain in explanation of why he does not face the charges against him! He appeals to his God and his Savior. What he has to appeal to is a jury of his fellow citizens.

According to the Paris correspondent of the *Weekly Dispatch*, one of the culprits in the Rue de Penthièvre Baths scandal (another Cleveland-street case) was an Orleanist notary of the highest respectability. "He had also a name for religion, and never lost an opportunity to inveigh against Freethinkers."

The Rev. Augustine James Pulling, curate of St. Peter's, Cranborne, Winkfield, has been committed for trial on a charge of indecently assaulting Emma Jane Beare, aged fifteen. The man of God has, in the meantime to remain in custody, one of his previous sureties having declined to renew his bail.

Some Nonconformist Christian advocates have endeavored to escape from the double difficulty of Jesus being executed on a Jewish holiday and not being three days in the grave, by rejecting the whole tradition of the Church, and alleging that he was crucified on a Thursday. But Tertullian and Clement of Alexandria both mention the fast of the sixth day as having been initiated in commemoration of the crucifixion; and the record that the Jews demanded that the legs of the malefactors should be broken in order that their carcasses might not remain on the cross on the Sabbath Day, which commenced at 6 p.m. on the Friday, sufficiently proves that the tradition was that Jesus was crucified on that day. Jesus, in the legend, had to take the place of the Paschal lamb, irrespective of the historical fact that executions did not take place at Passover; and he had to rise on the day of the sun, irrespective of the prophecy that he should be three days in the heart of the earth.

Dr. Danford Thomas, the Marylebone Coroner, held an inquest last week on the body of Sarah Wench, an old lady, who was discovered dead at her bedside in the attitude of prayer. The medical evidence showed that death was due to syncope from heart disease, and the jury returned a verdict in accordance with this evidence.

This should not go a-begging long: "Matrimony, most genuine for Christian Widowers. £100 to £200 will be given, but only after marriage, to the family who introduces to me a kind Protestant Gentleman, fair preferred, 55 or more, with means. Country Squire, Barrister, India Merchant, or Ship Owner, seeking no fortune with a wife. I am a true Christian,

amiable, kind, refined, distinguished, perfect lady, of good ancient family, 44, sympathetic, ladylike features, fond of home, widow, without children.—Address, etc., etc."

The above genuine advertisement is hardly more naïve than one which appears in the *Church Times*, asking for a parson to act as *locum tenens* during the holiday season; the only inducement offered being "use of the house and a maid-servant."

"Churching of Yeomanry and Militia at Dunbar" was the heading of one of the *Scotsman's* paragraphs a little time ago. They numbered 700, and the Rev. R. Buchanan officiated. We have sometimes heard our soldiers called old women, but we never thought it would come to this.

The French periodical, *L'Afrique*, which is published in Khartum, reports that the Arabs there have been holding indignation meetings, protesting against the traffic of rum as conducted by the Christians with the African people. Measures were discussed as to how to prevent the admission of these goods.

Owe no man anything, is a Biblical precept which all the Churches ignore. The Baptists own to a deficiency of some £10,000 in connection with their foreign mission. But then to be in debt affords so good an opportunity of appealing for cash.

Mr. Clements R. Markham adduces much evidence in the *English Historical Review* to show that Henry VII., and not Richard III., was really responsible for the murder of the princes in the Tower. History is so often a dubious affair, that one would think if God ever had a revelation to offer, he would afford some more certain evidence than historic testimony, though it is a question what item of Christianity has even that. Too much of what is called history is mere legend, tradition and prepossession.

A paper on "Neo-Paganism" in the *Quarterly Review*, while recognising in Goethe and Schiller the chiefs of the modern school of Neo-Pagans—who discard Christianity for the beauty that was Greece, the glory that was Rome—deals chiefly with the French Freethought poets, Gautier, Leconte de Lisle, and Richepin—finding them, of course, very unsatisfactory because without any reliance on sweet Jesus. With the reasons why men of genius, in France at least, do revolt from Christianity as a narrow, barbarous creed, and revert to Paganism for its ideals of beauty and delight, the *Quarterly Reviewer* does not attempt to grapple.

In addition to the Brotherhood of St. Paul, which received the official sanction and patronage of the Bishop of London, there is in the Church of England a yet more Catholic brotherhood, known as the Brothers of the Cross. This organisation has for its special object the religious training of the young. The real aim of all of them is to induce wealthy laymen to devote themselves to the service of the Church; for only those are accepted in the brotherhoods or sisterhoods who have a sufficient maintenance.

Some weeks ago, at the close of an evening revival service in Barbourville, Ky., the minister asked: "Are there any in this congregation who want to go to hell?" To this inquiry a young man responded by quietly raising his hand. He was indicted by the grand jury, but when he was arraigned in court, the judge promptly dismissed the case with the remark that nothing in the statutes of Kentucky prevented a man who wanted to go to hell, from taking his choice.

The newspapers say that Mr. Spurgeon's name has been found in a list of "Soft Tommys" kept by tramps. This shows that Mr. Spurgeon obeys Christ's command to give to him that asketh; but if he obeyed another command of Christ, to be poor, he would find it difficult to obey the first. We daresay the tramps have to come the Baptist "lay" with Mr. Spurgeon.

Wesleyan ministers don't seem anxious to go to heaven. During nine years 293 of them died, of whom 41 attained to the age of 80 or upwards. The average age was 60. Considering the time these gentlemen spent in this vale of tears, they may be said to have earned the condolence of all their friends. Perhaps they thought that heaven would keep-

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, May 10, Secular Hall, 61 New Church-road, Camberwell-road, S.E., at 7.30, "Death and the Devil."
 Friday, May 15, Corn Exchange, Chester, at 8, "Secularism and Cruelty: a Reply to the Bishop of Chester."
 May 17, N. S. S. Conference, Birmingham; 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.

A. R. ATKEY AND J. E. STAPLETON.—Your circular to hand. It would be very impolitic for Branches to accept your invitation, and instruct their delegates to vote at the Conference before hearing the Executive's explanation. Such a course would hardly promote "the reputation of the Freethought party," which we quite believe you wish to sustain.
 J. R. WILLOCK.—Pleased to hear Mr. Holyoake had such a hearty reception at Manchester. He was grey in the service of Freethought before we enlisted.
 J. G. FISHER.—We hope to see Mr. Judge with you at the Conference.
 J. LIGHTFOWLER.—Cuttings are always welcome.

J. THACKRAY.—We have seen funnier drawings of the Ark in which the Jews used to carry Jehovah. That such things are still given to children in Sunday schools should impel every Freethinker to join in "crushing the infamous."

W. MUMBY sends £1 for the Bradlaugh Memorial and will take two shares. This correspondent was led to take an interest in the Secular cause by Mr. Foote's imprisonment. A friend showed him the prosecuted Christmas Number, he was shocked at finding a man could be sent to jail for such a publication, he began to take in the *Freethinker*, and soon after joined the N. S. S.

J. CLARE.—We cannot answer such questions.

C. DURRANT says that Mr. Heaford's open-air lecture on Sunday at Kilburn was disturbed by Christian "brass, fiddles, and harmoniums." We have no doubt this kind of opposition will become more fashionable.

H. J. SUTTON.—Your letter is absolutely silly.

W. E. LEYS.—We have no doubt that Mr. Stanley Jones will justify his election.

H. COURTNEY.—Thanks for the paper. We hope the editor will have the fairness to insert your letter.

T. PHILLIPS.—Your letter is pointed and well written. The Spennymoor Branch is fortunate in such a secretary. The *North American Review* sells in England for 2s. Mr. Forder could get it for you.

R. H. WELLINGS.—That Jews did not allow their sons to read certain parts of the Old Testament till they were thirty years years of age, is a fact of common notoriety. It is mentioned by the Rev. Dr. Giles, in *Hebrew Records*, and by a host of other writers.

R. J. MURRAY (Nottingham).—We are pained by the contents of your letter, and can quite understand that you did not resign your office at the bookstall for nothing. Certainly 14 members do not fully represent the 36 who were absent.

J. BURKELL.—The little sketch of Charles Bradlaugh is well done. It reflects credit on Mr. O'Neill.

J. HOOPER (Nottingham).—We shall be glad to see you at the Conference. Pleased to have the approval of a hard-working veteran like yourself.

H. BROOKSBANK.—It is hardly worth while reviving old differences. We hope the Bradford Secularists will now pull together harmoniously.

W. HOLLAND.—Thanks. See paragraph.

JOSEPH BROWN.—We are obliged for the batch of cuttings.

S. M. PLACOCK.—Mr. Forder has entered you for ten shares in the Memorial Hall. We hope to see you at Birmingham.

W. S. GRAYSON.—It is good of you to take so much trouble, but we are overpressed with copy, and have already noticed Mr. Walters' address.

R. O. SMITH, treasurer, London Secular Federation, acknowledges the following:—Mr. Hemning, 10s.; J. Umpleby, £1; Julian Hooper, £1.

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 — Truthseeker — Ally Sloper's Half Holiday — Auckland Times — Spennymoor Chronicle — Doncaster Gazette — Kensington News — Cheshire Observer — Pall Mall Gazette — La Ste Bible Racontée par un Auvergnat — Catecismo Republicano — Reading Observer — Birmingham Daily Mail — The Age We Live In — Northern Echo — Glasgow Weekly Herald — Leek Times — Reading Standard — Port Elizabeth Telegraph — Crewe Star — British Temperance Advocate — Southern Echo — Better Way — Northampton Reporter — Northampton Chronicle.

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish to call our attention. 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.

The Hyde Park demonstration somewhat thinned Mr. Foote's audience on Sunday evening, but the meeting was very enthusiastic. On Monday evening Mr. Foote visited Northampton and delivered his cration on Charles Bradlaugh, in aid of the Memorial Fund. The audience included the flower of the Radical party, and all Mr. Bradlaugh's oldest living supporters. Mr. Foote's oration was followed with breathless interest. Many persons wept at the more pathetic points, and the applause throughout was most hearty. The Tory press is hinting that Mr. Foote is preparing to woo the constituency. This is decidedly too "previous," but if it were true, it is just possible that a worse successor to Mr. Bradlaugh might be found. The Radicals openly declare they will not vote for Mr. Manfield again.

Mr. Foote's lecture on behalf of the funds of the West London Branch crowded the Hammersmith Hall with a most appreciative audience, and the profit realised should be helpful in sustaining the open-air work during the summer. Some questions were asked, and there was a passage of arms between the lecturer and the Rev. Mr. Donaldson, a well-known local Church clergyman. Mr. Donaldson spoke eloquently, but he gave up the theory of Heaven and Hell being *places*, and said he meant to preach that view from his pulpit. Despite the intense heat of the room, the audience sat out the discussion to the very end. It was half-past ten before the meeting broke up.

Delegates from various progressive clubs in West Lambeth have been holding a conference for the purpose of drawing up a programme for the coming School Board election. The said conference has decided, by 17 votes to 15, not to adopt purely secular education in its programme, although nearly all the delegates are in favor of secular education, yet afraid to lose the Nonconformist vote by adopting it. The Battersea Branch has therefore ordered its two delegates to retire from the conference, as the Battersea Freethinkers will not vote for any candidate who does not advocate purely secular teaching in Board Schools.

Mr. Stanley Jones, the new secretary of the N. S. S., lectured on Sunday for the Woolwich Branch. The secretary tells us that Mr. Jones "treated his subject in a masterly manner," and that the Branch desires to "express a high opinion of him as a lecturer."

Mr. G. J. Holyoake had good meetings at Manchester. The following resolution was carried after his evening lecture: "That this meeting of Manchester Secularists and friends desire to congratulate Mr. Holyoake on his re-appearance amongst them, and to express their satisfaction at his enjoyment of health and mental energy at his advanced age, and hopes that he may long continue to benefit mankind by his cultured thought and exposition of Secularist principles."

The Liverpool Branch of the N. S. S. held its annual meeting on Sunday last, when the secretary's report and the balance-sheet (which showed a small balance in hand after all liabilities had been met) were read and passed. Mr. W. V. Hardwick was re-elected president, Messrs. Smith and Small elected vice-presidents, Mr. Doeg general secretary, Mr. Stocker financial secretary, and Mr. Hall treasurer. The old committeemen were, with two exceptions, re-elected,

and arrangements made for future propaganda. In the evening Mr. Harry Smith delivered a secular sermon on "Worse than an Infidel," in which he gave a sharp reply to Bishop Jayne. An earnest appeal on behalf of the Freethinkers' Benevolent Fund was responded to, and encouraging progress was made with the new hall scheme.

The Free Libraries of Camberwell are opened on Sunday for this month as an experiment. Voting books are also open at the Libraries, in which signatures of ratepayers for and against Sunday opening may be recorded. As some of the chapels are industriously signing in opposition, friends who are in favor of Sunday opening will do well to look in and record their votes.

Mr. L. K. Washburn shows in the *Boston Investigator* that Judge Thomas Herttell was the first who in America published a book in favor of total abstinence from intoxicating drinks. This was in 1819. Judge Herttell was an infidel. Yet Christians claim the temperance movement as a gospel one, despite the little incident at Cana, and the institution of the blessed sacrament.

We are pleased to note that *Freethought* of San Francisco is tidying over its temporary difficulties. It has sustained the cause with credit in the Western States, and we are glad to think it will not be allowed to founder.

Mr. Foote's review of Sir Edwin Arnold's *Light of the World* is copied from our columns into the *Progressive Thinker* of Chicago. We are always glad when our articles are useful to contemporaries, and only ask that they shall be fairly acknowledged.

We have received from Bombay the first number of a new fortnightly Freethought journal entitled *Modern Thought*. The contents are of an interesting and thoroughly Freethought character, opening with a paper on Herbert Spencer by B. F. Underwood. The number of contributors being necessarily limited, the editor does well to reprint from other journals. He is always welcome to copy anything, with the customary acknowledgments, from our columns. There should be ample room for such a paper at Bombay, where there are a multitude of historic faiths all in process of dissolution.

Among the publications of the week is a translation of *The Evolution of Marriage*, by Dr. Charles Letourneau, one of the foremost anthropologists and outspoken Freethinkers of France.

The *Morpeth Herald* devotes an article to "Blacklegging with the Bible," pointing to the British Bible Society as "stumping the country with showman's van, and with one hand pointing the way to the unknown Better Land, and with the other hand underselling the poor newsagent." The *M. H.* also points out that in certain Sunday-schools a regular Sunday trading goes on, the children being supplied with penny goody-goody books, instead of the same being purchased from the local newsagents.

Mr. T. Phillips, the energetic secretary of the Spennymoor Branch of the N. S. S., addresses two different well-written letters on the proposed Hunt and Wise discussion to the *Auckland Times* and to the *Spennymoor Chronicle*. The latter paper devotes an editorial to the subject, couched in terms of impartiality. The Spennymoor Branch should profit by the publicity thus obtained.

The leaven of Freethought is slowly working among the Scandinavians of America. Mr. N. S. Johnson has done good work by his pamphlets *Is the Bible God's Word?* and *Priest and Freethinker*, and we now hear that a radical Freethought weekly is established at Minneapolis. The editor is Axel Lundeborg, author of several heterodox pamphlets.

Dr. E. A. Abbott, late headmaster of the City of London School, and the reputed author of *Philochristus*, has put out a new volume with the title *Philomythus, an Antidote Against Credulity*. It is a discussion of Cardinal Newman's "Essay on Ecclesiastical Miracles." Dr. Abbott sees clearly that if the ecclesiastical miracles are untrustworthy, so also are those

of the New Testament, and he is prepared to accept the consequences of this admission.

Mr. W. M. W. Call's posthumous work in refutation of the theological doctrine of final causes is being published by Messrs. Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co.

A third and revised edition of Dr. Tylor's great work on *Primitive Culture* is being put forward by Messrs. Murray. We have often recommended Dr. Tylor's work for its able exposition of the basic principles of superstition as well as for its light on the evolution of human culture.

The twenty-sixth volume of the *Dictionary of National Biography* contains a long account, by Sidney Lee, of Lord Herbert of Cherbury, whom Leland calls the father of English Deism, and a brief one of Henry Hethrington, written by Mr. G. J. Holyoake, who points to Hethrington's services as an upholder of a free and unstamped press, but does not mention his pamphlet "Cheap Salvation." Godfrey Higgins is inadequately noticed by Rev. Alexander Gordon who calls his *Celtic Druids* his most important work. The name of Julian Hibbert does not appear in the Dictionary though it is as well worth remembrance as many of those that do appear.

The debate on the Legal Eight Hours Question between Mr. Foote and Mr. G. B. Shaw is now on sale. It makes a handsome sixpenny brochure. The verbatim report has been carefully revised by both disputants.

Mr. Foote's *Reminiscences of Charles Bradlaugh* is now on sale. The portion which appeared in the *Freethinker* has been revised, and about twenty-five per cent. of new matter has been added. Mr. Bradlaugh's host of admirers will probably be glad to possess a copy of this little work.

Mr. Forder has a list of subscriptions to the Bradlaugh Memorial Fund, which must appear in our next, owing to a press of matter. Subscribers please note.

SECULARISING OUR INSTITUTIONS.

I AM an Oddfellow. Some of the readers of this journal will not need to be told that. By this term I may explain, however, that I am a member of the I.O.O.M.U. A few weeks ago I attended the grand banquet of the Past Grand's Lodge at the Bridge House Hotel, and the chairman, to my surprise and gratification, said grace in the language of Shakespeare, "May good digestion wait on appetite," etc., instead of in the language of scripture.

Thus Mr. Foote, at the Federation dinner, set an example which has been speedily imitated. And though the majority of those present were professing Christians, they all seemed perfectly satisfied with the grace, and certainly ate their dinners as though they were not troubled with bad digestion.

This is the way we proceed in secularising our institutions. When I first went to business in the City—now more than twenty years ago—many firms commenced business with a prayer. How many do this now? Why even in shipping-houses merchants do not believe that prayer will save their vessels—they rely exclusively upon insurances effected at Lloyd's. So that to speak truth, science wins hands down against scripture, and special Providence thrown in as make-weight.

In our law courts the oath is still retained, and hundreds go through the form of kissing the book. For my part, I think that a law court should be a perfectly secular institution. No phase of religious belief should be introduced there. The evidence of a witness should be accepted, not because he is a Christian, or a Jew, or a Freethinker, but because he is a man.

In some measure too we are secularising our schools. Whatever some of your readers may think of Mr. Gould claiming his right as a Freethinker to teach the Bible in a Board School, I think that it was a very good stroke of policy on his part to raise the question. It will at least teach Christians that the Freethinker regards himself not as one who is unqualified to teach the Bible; but, on the contrary, as one who is specially qualified to give a rational interpretation of it. It should be remembered also that anybody who calls himself a Christian is already permitted

to teach the Bible in Board Schools. The Catholic may teach it; so may the Methodist, the Baptist, the Congregationalist, and the Unitarian, as well as the Church of England Christian. And for my part I should like to know what difference there is between the view of the Bible taken by the advanced Unitarian and that taken by the Agnostic or the Atheist. Certainly the difference is so slight that it is sometimes imperceptible. Of course this is an argument for taking the Bible out of the schools altogether and secularising all our institutions. But while the Bible is retained in our schools I see no reason why the Freethinker should not be allowed to give his view of it, as well as any other duly qualified teacher. The duty of the Freethinker, however, is to raise these questions at every reasonable opportunity, for by persistently putting our views before the public we may hope in time to get a rational and satisfactory settlement of the difficulty.

A. B. MOSS.

CHRIST'S BAPTISM IN THE JORDAN.

"Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, and said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" (Matt. xi., 2, 3).

AFTER his previous acquaintance with Jesus, after acknowledging him to be the Christ (John i., 19), it does seem strange that John the Baptist should express any doubt of Jesus being the true Messiah. His doing so is no edifying reflection on the miraculous baptism of Jesus in the Jordan; and Jesus, evidently well aware of this, extols John to his public—not forgetting, however, at the same time, to show his own superiority. John must have been of a rather sceptical turn of mind to have doubted Jesus, when so short a time previously such convincing evidence was shown him, which should have proved beyond dispute the divinity of Jesus.

Either the baptising affair is a myth, or John, from being a co-operator with Jesus, had developed into a rival; but becoming so unfortunate, through braving royal tyranny, as to be put in prison, and consequently his ardor getting somewhat damped, he sent to Jesus asking the before-cited question, in the hope that Jesus would exercise his supernatural powers, and free him from his unpleasant position.

What answer did John get? His disciples return, directed by Jesus to tell him that all he had heard concerning Christ was, without exception, the truth. John's feelings on receiving this reply are not recorded.

Shortly after John is beheaded, and Jesus, hearing of it, makes an abrupt departure, and gets to a desert place. As Jesus was one of the Trinity, he would naturally, or rather unnaturally, possess divine foresight. Being thus possessed, he would know the impending fate of John, and the empty praise he gave him when addressing the multitude does not clear his character of the cowardice and unmanly spirit in which he acted towards his cousin.

John fearlessly denounced the conduct of Herod, and suffered the penalty. Jesus, though John was an important person in connection with the advent of his coming, basely deserted him, and, casually hearing of his death, quickly gets out of the way, seemingly taking the murder of John as a hint for himself.

John was the principal witness at the wonderful baptism of Jesus in the Jordan. It was he, so the account says, that poured water on the head of Jesus, and directly he did so, "Jesus went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. iii., 16—17). Sounds very pretty, but myth and fact will not mix, and no amount of stirring will make them.

First, we will take Christ rising from the water. In Grecian mythology we have Venus rising from the sea. Was Christ enacting a miniature representation of her?

Passing that by, we will bring science into the argument. A man with slight aid from his hands and feet, can keep an upright posture in tranquil waters too deep for him to stand in. By muscular action he can spring up in the water, as far as his waist; he can do no more, gravitation will not allow him to. How then did Jesus raise himself from the water? Did he go up with a jerk, or did he ascend gracefully? No doubt Christians would say the latter manner.

To speculate upon the matter, we may say, if the incident did take place, that Jesus possessed the power of mesmerism to an extreme degree, thus enabling him to assume a divine

character. This mesmeric power we may presume him to have considerably exercised over his disciples, and if this was the case, the peculiar circumstances of Christ's birth, and the other strange affairs connected with his career, may easily be accounted for.

Mesmerism will not affect everybody, and evidently the Scribes and Pharisees were not fit subjects. John the Baptist seemingly partook of their non-fitness, and its non-effect with other causes, probably induced him to ask Jesus, if he were "he that should come."

JAMES H. WATERS.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

EXECUTIVE MEETING, April 29, Mr. Foote in the chair. Present: Miss Vance; Messrs. Reynolds, Courtney, Warren, Bater, Easthop, Truelove, Watts, Samson, Moss, Umpleby, Larkin, Wheeler, Stranding, Heaford, Gordon, Davies, Forder, and Stanley Jones, secretary. The minutes of the last meeting were read, and their adoption proposed, seconded, and carried. Mr. Foote reported that he had handed over to the treasurer for the General Fund £50, and the same amount to the Benevolent Fund, being a legacy left to him for that purpose. Mr. Foote then introduced Mr. Stanley Jones, the new secretary to the Executive. It was then decided that all the vice-presidents for the year 1890-91 should be proposed for the coming year. Miss Vance proposed, and Mr. Bater seconded, that Mr. Forder be proposed as vice-president; carried. Messrs. Wheeler and Reynolds proposed Mr. George Jacob Holyoake; carried. Messrs. Foote and Warren proposed and seconded Mr. S. M. Peacock, of South Shields; carried. Mr. Moss and Mr. Heaford proposed and seconded the abolition of special lecturers, upon which a discussion arose; and Mr. Foote intimated that he would have something to say on the subject at the Conference, upon which Mr. Moss withdrew his motion. It was proposed and seconded that Mr. Reynolds be proposed treasurer for the coming year. It was proposed and seconded that Mr. Stanley Jones be proposed as secretary; carried. Four Branches applied for leaflets for distribution, and 2,000 each were granted to them. Mr. Foote reported that he had written to seven members of Parliament concerning the insult offered to Mr. Robinson, a member of the N. S. S., by deputy coroner Wyatt, but had received no reply. The death of Mr. W. J. Birch, one of the Society's vice-presidents, then came under the Executive's notice. Mr. Foote drew up a resolution of condolence to be sent to the family of deceased. Mr. Truelove proposed the resolution, and Mr. Moss seconded it; and it was put to the meeting and carried unanimously. The secretary reported that the balance in hand in the General Fund is £211 11s. 7d., and the Benevolent Fund £38 0s. 7d., being an increase on the month of £6 3s. 9d. Mr. Forder presented financial statement of the late Children's Party: income, £19 12s. 5d.; expenditure, £18 9s. 7d. Mr. Truelove proposed, and Mr. Wheeler seconded, that the balance, £1 2s. 10d., be handed over to the Benevolent Fund.—STANLEY JONES, secretary.

ONE OF DR. JAYNE'S SORT.

Under Section 5 of the Act 52 and 53 Vict., c. 44, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children applied yesterday to the Westminster magistrate that John Wyatt, grocer, of 20 Pond-place, Chelsea, should be declared a person unfit to have the care and custody of two of his young sons. At the end of January last Wyatt was convicted of unduly chastising his children with a cane, and was sentenced to twenty-eight days' imprisonment. He appealed, and after fresh evidence, which was not before the magistrate, the conviction was mitigated to a fine of £8. The two boys who were beaten have not been back to their father, but have been kept at one of the society's homes. Mr. Smyth, for the father, now urged that because a man had once been guilty of excessively castigating his children, it was no reason that he should be deprived for ever of his paternal responsibilities. Wyatt was a man of strong religious and moral convictions, and thought he was doing right, but in future he would take care not to overstep the law. Mr. De Rutzen said he was of opinion that the section of the Act ought to be looked at very closely, and that an isolated instance of cruelty would not warrant him in making an order to take the children permanently out of his custody. The summons would be dismissed. The children were handed over to the father.—*Weekly Dispatch* (May 3).

BRADLAUGH MEMORIAL.

TO THE FREETHINKERS OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—

Following the example of our American brethren, who have raised a "Paine Memorial Hall" in the city of Boston, the Executive of the National Secular Society has resolved to raise a fund for erecting a Freethought Hall and Institute in memory of CHARLES BRADLAUGH, whose name will thus be continuously associated with the spread and maintenance of those principles which were the inspiration of his life.

Thousands of Freethinkers are mourning the loss of their great leader, and anxious to express their feelings of admiration, gratitude and affection towards him. What better opportunity could they desire than the one which is now offered?

Although the present state of the law does not allow of a Freethought Society holding any kind of property, there are methods by which this project can be satisfactorily realised.

Donations will be held by the National Secular Society, or by the appointed Treasurer on its behalf, until the project is ripe for execution; when the total amount will be invested in the Hall and Institute in the names of a sufficiently large number of elected persons, who will act as Trustees for the Freethought party.

The remainder of the required amount will consist of shares in the "Bradlaugh Memorial Hall Company, Limited," which is registered under the Companies' Acts, with a capital of £10,000. The shares are £1 each, payable in easy instalments, so that the poorest Freethinkers may participate in the commemoration of their lost leader.

Any Freethinker, whether or not a member of the National Secular Society, can become a shareholder, and every shareholder is eligible as a director.

COMMITTEE:

- Allbutt, Dr. H. A., 24 Park-sq, Leeds
- Alward, S., 59 Orwell-st, Grimsby
- Anderson, J., 142 Old-st, E.C.
- Baker, D., Albany-cottage, Balsall-heath, Birmingham
- Brown, J., 86 Durham-st, Bentinck, Newcastle-on-Tyne
- Brumage, J., 38 Sydenham-terrace, Portsmouth
- Burton, G., 34 Benwell-rd, Drayton-park, N.
- Carrier, R., 13 Theobald-street, New Swindon
- Colville, D., Richmond-street, Bath-street, E.C.
- Cooper, R. A., Thorpe, Norwich
- Crowther, J. N., 32 Grove-st, Halifax
- Dawson, B., Low Spennymoor, Durham
- Dewar, F., 48 North Hanover-street, Edinburgh
- Elder, W., Fountain-gardens, Paisley
- Ellis, J. H., 143 Trinity-road, Upper Tooting
- Fowler, G. L., 129 Aldersgate-st, E.C.
- Fraser, G., 7 Hemdean-rd, Reading
- Furby, E. C., 20 Red Lion-st, E.C.
- Gott, J. W., 36 Villiers-st, Bradford
- Haines, J. F., 212 Mile End-road
- Henley, J. F., 24 Dunster-gardens, Brondesbury, N.W.
- Holstead, T., 46 St. Helen's-road, Daubhill, Bolton
- Hartmann, S., 29 Guybion-avenue, Herne-hill
- Herbert, C., 319 Goswell-road
- Jones, C., Northampton-villa, Arran-street, Roath, Cardiff
- Johnson, R. S., 125 Wellingboro'-road, Northampton
- Judge, J., Coburg-street, Leeds
- Killick, R., 45 Florence-road, New Cross, S.E.
- King, Alfred, Hollington, Hastings
- Knox, W. M., 13 Shandon-st., Belfast
- Little, Jas., jun., W. Auckland, Durham
- Lovell, A. J., 19 Derby-street, Sunderland
- Lowe, E., 22 Earmshaw-lane, Mossley
- Martin, R., 54 Powis-st., Woolwich
- Moon, E., 14 Strand, Southampton
- Morrish, W. H., 141 Cheltenham-road, Bristol
- Moss, A. B., 1 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, S.E.
- Peacock, S. M., 35 Baring-street, South Shields
- Pegg, Chas., 76 Pigott-street, Greenheys, Manchester
- Pownceby, E., 9 Finsbury-st., E.C.
- Quinn, R., Oldham
- Reynolds, W. H., Camplin-house, New Cross, S.E.
- Robertson, John, Lyndhurst-villa, Harringay, N.
- Robertson, J. M., 157 Broadhurst-gardens, West Hampstead
- Robinson, J., 35 Gladstone-terrace, Sunnyside, Tow Law
- Rothera, H., Headland-ter., Liversedge, Yorkshire
- Rowney, J., 155 Winston-rd, N.
- Rutt, F., 2 Westbeech-road, Wood Green, N.
- Samson, J., 22 Paget-road, Stoke Newington, N.
- Samson, Mrs. "
- Shepherd, H. G., Tamworth-place, Fremantle, Bournemouth
- Simpson, John, 3 Butterburn-place, Hamilton
- Slater, T., Secular Hall, Leicester
- Smallman, F., Hayesleigh, Old Trafford, Manchester
- Smith, R. O., Hall of Science, Old-street, E.C.
- Smith, Mrs. Thornton, 14 Townshend-road, St. John's Wood
- Standing, G., 9 Finsbury-st., E.C.
- Sugden, W. Lerner, Leek, Staffordshire
- Thomas, Angus, Beechwood, Merton
- Truelove, E., 256 High Holborn
- Umpleby, J., 78 Gresham-road, Brixton, S.W.
- Vance, Miss E. M., 24 Caroline-street, Camden Town, N.W.
- Weatherburn, Martin, Hartford Colliery, Northumberland
- Wheeler, J. M., 27 Enkel-street, Holloway, N.

G. W. FOOTE, Chairman.
 GEO. ANDERSON, Treasurer.
 ROBERT FORDER, Secretary,
 28 STONECUTTER STREET, E.C.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S ANNUAL CONFERENCE, 1891.

AGENDA.

1. Minutes of last meeting.
2. President's report.
3. Treasurer's report.
4. Election of President.
5. Election of Vice-Presidents.

Notice of motion by the Executive:—

(a) That the previous list of Vice-Presidents, with the exception of Mr. Birch (deceased), be re-elected.

Notice of motion by the Executive:—

(b) That the following be elected Vice-Presidents: Mr. G. J. Holyoake, Mr. Robert Forder, Mr. S. M. Peacock.

Notice of motion by Mr. G. W. Foote:—

(c) That the following be elected Vice-Presidents: Mr. Joseph Brown (Newcastle), Mr. J. H. Ellis (London), Dr. T. R. Allinson (London).

6. Election of Treasurer.
7. Election of Auditors.
8. Election of Secretary.

Notice of motion by the Executive:—

(a) That Mr. Robert Forder be elected to act as Honorary Secretary until the next Conference.

(b) That Mr. Stanley Jones be elected as paid Secretary.

Mr. Forder is also nominated by the North-West London Branch.

9. (a) Statement by Mr. G. W. Foote with respect to the Bradlaugh Memorial.
- (b) Statement by Mr. G. W. Foote with respect to the Fund for Liquidating Mr. Bradlaugh's Liabilities.

10. Notice of motion by the Nottingham Branch:—
 "That the resolution of the Executive, excluding non-members from the Bradlaugh Memorial Committee, be rescinded."

11. Notice of motion by the Nottingham Branch:—
 "That the Executive be instructed to add to the Bradlaugh Memorial Committee such trusted friends of Mr. Bradlaugh as may be willing to co-operate with them in doing honor to his memory."

12. Notice of motion by the Battersea Branch:—
 "That in future the Secretary shall make inquiries as to which Branches can entertain the ensuing Conference, the names of the said Branches to be printed on the nomination circular, thus preventing Branches voting for towns that cannot entertain a Conference."

13. Notice of motion by Newcastle Branch:—
 "That at future Conferences no one but duly elected delegates of Branches, members of the Executive, and Vice-Presidents be allowed to vote; but that any individual member be allowed to speak on any motion before the Conference by asking leave of the President; and that any Branch of less than 20 members be allowed one delegate, and an additional delegate be allowed for every 20 members up to 60, and no Branch to be allowed more than three delegates in all."

14. Notice of motion by the Battersea Branch:—
 "That in order to make the N. S. S. Executive thoroughly representative, each provincial Branch may elect a London member of the N. S. S. to represent it at all Executive meetings."

15. Notice of motion by Mr. G. W. Foote:—
 (a) "That the Executive be authorised to revise the existing list of Special Lecturers.
 (b) "That the Examining Board be abolished, and that certificates be henceforth issued to Special Lecturers at the discretion of the Executive.
 (c) "That the Executive be authorised to revise the list of Special Lecturers at any time, subject to the right of any person aggrieved to appeal to the next Annual Conference."

The *Paternoster Review*, the new organ of cultured Roman Catholicism in England, not receiving adequate support, has ceased to exist.

"Leo Taxil" is blossoming out as an anti-Semitic colleague of M. Drumont. His zeal for Catholicism is apparently shown in an itch to persecute the Jews.

16. Notice of motion by Finsbury Park Branch :—
“That a committee be appointed to consider the drawing up of Freethought leaflets and literature for distribution at meetings of Branches.

17. Notice of motion by Finsbury Park Branch :—
“That in view of the scarcity of lecturers, the N. S. S. be invited to consider the ways and means of training lecturers for the Society.”

18. Notice of motion by Finsbury Park Branch :—
“That some steps should be taken with a view to accomplishing a closer intimacy between the National Secular Society and the Freethought organisations of the English Colonies and the United States of America.”

19. Motion by Mr. G. W. Foote :—
(a) “That the N. S. S. publish a Monthly Magazine, to contain articles, monthly reports of Secular work throughout the country, and, if possible, a section for the use of young people.
(b) That the appointment of editor and the business management be left to the Executive.”

The Conference will be held at the Baskerville Hall, The Crescent, Birmingham.

The morning sitting will commence at 10.30, and will close at 12.30. The afternoon sitting will open at 2.30, and close at 4.30. The public meeting in the evening will be held in the Exchange Assembly Room, New Street; chair taken at 7. Speeches will be delivered by G. W. Foote, R. Forder, A. B. Moss, G. Standring, Stanley Jones, and others.

The Conference will be open to all Freethinkers, but only members of the National Secular Society can speak and vote.

DELEGATE ARRANGEMENTS.

Delegates, on arriving at Birmingham, should make for Baskerville Hall, a few minutes' walk from New-street Station. Mr. Partridge, the secretary, will give them a list of hotels, and will see them conducted to the places they select.

On Sunday, at 1 p.m., a dinner will be provided at the Queen's Arms Hotel, Easy Row. Tickets, 2s.; tea will be provided at Baskerville Hall.

The Birmingham Committee are making arrangements for parties on the Monday to view places of interest in the city and neighborhood.

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

L. Normeld, 1s.; Bailey, 1s.; T. Lea, 1s.; F. Newcombe, 2s. 6d.; P. Angus, 6d.; Warner, 6d.; F. S., 1s.; O. J., 6d.; J. Hannah, 4s.; W. M. Shepherd, 2s.; H. Thomas, 2s. 6d.; G. Cone, 1s.; R. Morris, 2s. 6d.; J. Brierly, £1; An Admirer, 2s.; A. Pope, 5s.; T. Hulme, £1; E. Tann, 5s.; M. Freeman, 2s. 6d.; G. Adams, 2s. 6d.; A. Zann, 1s.; G. Macano, 10s.; J. T. Dixon, 1s.; Joy, 1s.; J. A. Cann, 1s.; A. Saltor, 1s.; T. Foreman, 2s.; E. Borman, 1s.; J. Peacock, 2s. 6d.; Roger Jackson, 5s.; J. Summerfield, 1s.; John Hooper, 2s. 6d.; J. Bartram, 2s.; J. F. Armstead, £5; A Bookbinder, 2s. 6d.; Blackburn Branch N. S. S., 17s. 9d.; Halifax, £25 5s. 3d.; H. Tongue, 2s. 6d.; C. White, £1; W. Brierley, £1.—W. H. REYNOLDS, Treasurer, Camplin House, New Cross, London.

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.

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.30, Mr. G. Bernard Shaw, "Freethinking, Old and New." Monday, at 8, social gathering. Wednesday, at 8, dramatic class. Thursday, at 8, committee meeting.

Camberwell—61 New Church Road, S.E.: 7.30, Mr. G. W. Foote, "Death and the Devil."

East London—Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile End Road: 8, Mr. S. Soddy, "Myth and Science."

Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C.: 7, Mr. J. M. Robertson, "Atheism and Conduct."

Leyton—Holly Bush Assembly Room, Grange Road: 7, Mr. Charles Johnson, "The Bible, Unworthy of God, Unsuitable to Man." Admission free, discussion invited.

Milton Hall, Kentish Town Road, N.W.: 7.30, Miss Violet E. Levy, musical selections; 8, Mr. J. H. Levy, "Conjugal Rights."

Monday, at 8.30, social meeting. Tuesday, at 8, singing and dramatic classes (practice).

West Ham—Secular Hall, 121 Broadway, Plaistow: 7, Capt. Pfoundes, "England's Duty to India."

Woolwich—"Sussex Arms," Assembly Room, 60 Plumstead Road (entrance, Maxey Road): 7.30, Mr. Stanley Jones, "God and Man."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park Gates: 11.15, Mr. Heaford, "The God Idea."

Bethnal Green—Opposite St. John's Church: 11.15, Mr. A. B. Moss, "Two Revelations."

Camberwell—Station Road: 11.30, Mr. W. J. Ramsey, "New Testament Morals."

Clerkenwell Green: 11.30, Mr. F. Haslam, "Is Christianity True?" A special meeting of members after the lecture.

Edmonton—Corner of Angel Road: 6.30, Mr. Sam Standring, "Charles Bradlaugh, the True Patriot."

Finsbury Park (near the band-stand): 11.30, Mr. Sam Standring, "The Wesleyan Methodist Census, 1891"; 3.30, Mr. J. Fagan, "What is Sin?"

Hammersmith Bridge (Middlesex side): 6.30, Mr. W. Heaford, "The Inutility of Religion."

Hyde Park, near Marble Arch: 11.30, Mr. J. Fagan, "Prayer."

Kilburn—Salisbury Road (close to Queen's Park Station): 6.30, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "Who was Jesus, and what did he Teach?"

Kingsland Green: 11.30, Mr. P. H. Snelling, "Christ's Farewell."

Lambeth—Corner of Belvedere Road (opposite St. Thomas's Hospital), Westminster Bridge: 6.30, Mr. F. Haslam, "Why I am a Freethinker."

Midland Arches (corner of Battle Bridge Road): 11.30, Mr. R. Rosetti, "Is Easter a Christian Festival?"

Mile End Waste: 11.30, Mr. George Standring, "Why I Became a Secularist."

Old Pimlico Pier: 11.30, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "History of the Inquisition."

Regents Park (near Gloucester Gate): 3, Mr. H. Snell, "Has the Religion of Christ been of Benefit to the World?"

Tottenham—Corner of West Green Road: 3.30, Mr. Sam Standring, "Our Objections to Roman Catholicism."

Victoria Park, near the fountain: 3.30, Mr. A. B. Moss, "The Teachings of Charles Bradlaugh."

Wood Green—Jolly Butcher's Hill: 11.30, Mr. E. Calvert, "Religion and Secularism Contrasted."

COUNTRY.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, Cambridge Street: Mrs. Thornton Smith, 11, "Secularism: what it is"; 3, "A Plea for Atheism"; 7, "Evolution of Conscience."

Chatham—"Old George Inn," Globe Lane: 6.30, Mr. F. J. Boorman will lecture.

Crook—35 Gladstone Terrace, Sunnyside, Tow Law: 6.30, consideration of the Agenda for Conference.

Glasgow—Albion Hall, College Street: 12 noon, debating class' Mr. W. Gilmour, "Prepare to meet thy God"; 6.30, Mr. J. P. Gilmour, "Spontaneous Generation."

Heckmondwike—At Mr. John Rothera's, Bottoms: 2.30, a meeting.

Leeds—Crampton's Temperance Hotel, Briggate: 7, members, meeting to appoint delegates to Conference, and arrange for outdoor propaganda during summer.

Liverpool—Camden Hall, Camden Street: 7, Mr. T. S. Gowland, "The Modern Aspect of Scientific Theories."

Manchester N. S. S., Secular Hall, Rusholme Road, Oxford Road, All Saints: 6.30, Mr. A. B. Wakefield, "The First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to Timothy chapter iii." Free.

Newcastle-on-Tyne—Working Men's Club, Nelson Street: fortnightly financial meeting, important business.

Nottingham—Secular Hall, Beck Street: 7, Mr. J. Cooper, "Bible Dreams." Friday, May 15, at 8, special meeting of members to discuss Conference Agenda.

Portsmouth—Wellington Hall, Wellington Street, Southsea: 3, debating class, Mr. Googe, "Dr. Paley on the Supposed Effects of Christianity"; 7, Mr. Freake, "The Methods of Secularism and Christianity."

Reading—Forester's Hall, West Street: Mr. W. J. Ramsey, 11, "The Kingdom of Heaven"; 3, "Christ's Moral Fables"; 7, "A New Gospel Harmony."

Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham Street: Mr. Ernest Evans, 3, "Plants and their Visitors"; 7, "Mind in Animals."

South Shields—Capt. Duncan's Navigation School, King Street: 7, readings, etc.

Spennymoor—Victoria Hall, Dundas Street: 6, Mr. T. Phillips, a reading.

Sunderland—Albert Rooms, Coronation Street: 7, Mr. A. T. Dipper, "Moral Reasons for Rejecting Christianity."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Manchester—At the corner of Denmark Road and Oxford Road: 3, Mr. A. B. Wakefield, "Freethinkers—an Answer to the Rev. S. Pearson."

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon Road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—May 10, morning, Bethnal Green; afternoon, Victoria Park; 17, Conference; 24, morning, Kingsland; afternoon, Victoria Park; 31, morning, Battersea; afternoon, Finsbury Park. June 7, morning, Clerkenwell; afternoon, Victoria Park; 14, morning, Woolwich; afternoon, Finsbury Park; 21, morning, Westminster; evening, Camberwell; 28, morning, Clerkenwell; afternoon, Finsbury Park. July 5, morning, Clerkenwell; afternoon, Victoria Park; 12, morning, Woolwich; 19, morning, Westminster.

C. J. HUNT, 48 Fordingley Road, St. Peter's Park, London, W.—May 10, morning, Pimlico; evening, Kilburn; 17, morning, Clerkenwell; evening, Battersea; 24, morning, Hyde Park; evening, Hammersmith; 31, morning, Camberwell; evening, Lambeth. June 7, morning, Kingsland Green; afternoon, Regent's Park; 14, morning, Hyde Park; evening, Kilburn; 21, morning, Clerkenwell; evening, Lambeth; 28, morning, Pimlico; evening, Lambeth.

STANLEY JONES, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.—May 10, evening, Woolwich. June 7, morning, Plaistow Green. July 5, morning, Plaistow Green; 19, morning, Kingsland Green; 26, morning, Battersea.

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