

65578

REPORT
OF THE
COMMITTEE
OF
SOUTH PLACE CHAPEL,
FOR THE YEAR 1878.

SOUTH PLACE CHAPEL

1878.

Minister.

MONCURE D. CONWAY, M.A., Hamlet House, Hammersmith.

Committee.

Mrs. ANDERSON
Mr. E. K. BLYTH
" W. BURR
" G. W. COOKE
" E. DALLOW
" R. G. HEMBER
" G. HICKSON
" P. HICKSON
" R. S. JOHNSON
" J. KNIGHT
" E. R. LEVEY

Mrs. McMORRAN
Mr. W. J. REYNOLDS
" C. H. SEYLER
" J. SHAW
" W. SHURY
" J. STOUT
Mrs. THOS. TAYLOR
Mr. W. D. THOMSON
" A. J. WATERLOW
Miss WILLIAMS

Treasurer and Chairman.

Mr. GEORGE HICKSON, 35, Highbury New Park, N.

Secretary.

Mr. W. J. REYNOLDS, Elm House, Mare Street, Hackney.

Auditors.

Mr. McMORRAN

Mr. J. A. LYON

Trustees.

Mr. WM. BURR
" JNO. CUNNINGTON
" GEO. HICKSON
" J. A. LYON
" M. E. MARSDEN

Mr. W. C. NEVITT
" J. L. SHUTER
" F. WALTERS
Sir S. H. WATERLOW, Bart.,
M.P.
Mr. A. J. WATERLOW

Secretary Soree Committee.

Mr. CORRIE B. GRANT, 1, Mitre Court Buildings, E.C.

Choir-Master.

Mr. J. TROUSSELLE, 7, Blandford Place, N.W.

Report of the Committee
OF
SOUTH PLACE CHAPEL,
FOR THE YEAR 1878.

THE Committee in presenting the members of South Place Congregation with the customary Annual Report, have again the pleasure of recording a period of steady progress. Not only is the financial position of the Society, as will be seen from the annexed balance sheet, satisfactory; but what is perhaps, of even more importance, there has been during the past year a continued influx of new members. This circumstance alone, apart from others to which attention will be drawn, indicates that not only do the force and originality of Mr. Conway's discourses continue to command a deserved popularity, but that liberal opinions in religious matters are— notwithstanding many adverse influences—steadily advancing.

Probably, one of the circumstances that most tends to prevent the spread of advanced ideas in religion, as in politics, is the want of union and sympathy between the various divisions of liberal opinion. Conscious of this, the Committee gladly welcomed and assisted a proposal of Mr. Conway's to hold during the month of June a "Conference of Liberal Thinkers," the meeting of which it was thought might possibly result in some more systematic work being done in furthering moral progress and spreading enlightened opinion. This conference was held on June 13th and 14th, and was well attended by ladies and gentlemen fairly representing

the various schools of advanced thought, both in Europe and America. As might have been expected from such an assemblage, much diversity of opinion prevailed, not only as to the objects to be attained, but also concerning the best means of securing them. Nevertheless, the papers read, and the discussions held, had the result of clearing away much misapprehension, and indicating many points of agreement between minds of a very diverse order.* The most important result, however, was the formation of an "Association of Liberal Thinkers," which there is good reason to believe, will shortly enter upon an energetic and useful career. In support of these anticipations, it may be mentioned that the Association has already, by the exertions of Mr. Conway, secured the adhesion of the leading scientific and literary men. With such honoured names as those which will duly appear, enlisted for active work, it is scarcely rash to predict a character and influence for the Association, which must redound to the credit of the place where it was initiated.

Another matter that has engaged the attention of the Committee during the past year, has been the preparation of new rules for the government of the Society. For some time past it has been felt that the old rules were inadequate, and as no provision was made for circulating them amongst the members, many were unaware of the existence of any rules whatever. Early in the year the Sub-Committee that had been entrusted with the task of drafting a new code of rules, reported, and the General Committee at a number of meetings carefully revised the work. The result was submitted to a general meeting of the members on October 20th, and the Committee feel well rewarded for the trouble they have taken by the keen interest shown in the matter by the general body of the members. Two adjournments were found neces-

* The Report of the proceedings has been printed, and can be obtained in the Library.

sary, the rules being ultimately adopted, with some modifications, on November 3rd, and confirmed, in accordance with the provisions of the Trust Deed, on December 8th. Two main objects have been pursued by those engaged in the preparation of these rules. First, to extend and define the rights of the members as fully as written regulations can do so; and, secondly, to interest as many as possible in the active work of the Society.

Amongst the events of the year, the Committee record with satisfaction the following interesting incident. One of our members, Mr. McIntyre, sought permission to make a collection of surplus books for the use of the patients in the various London Hospitals. The Committee willingly gave their sanction and approval to the scheme, and have pleasure in being able to state that no less than 1,500 volumes have been distributed amongst the Metropolitan Hospitals.

Another circumstance also indicates that there is no lack of energy in our Society. In the month of October, the Committee were asked to permit a series of lectures on Philosophy, to be given by Mr. James M. Rigg, B.A., Oxon., a gentleman who had recently come amongst us. Believing that all educational efforts of a high character were completely in accordance with the aims of the Society, the Committee gladly granted the use of the building at a nominal charge, and have the satisfaction of reporting that upwards of 100 ladies and gentlemen have given these lectures their support.

The Soirées have been held during the season with the accustomed success, and the Soirée Committee have arranged the details of these social gatherings with so much prudence and care that they have been able to contribute materially towards the funds of the Society. It will also be freshly within the recollection of the members that a most agreeable meeting has been held in the nature of a Reception

to Mrs. Conway, on which occasion a substantial gift was handed to Mr. and Mrs. Conway, in the name of the congregation.

In addition to the usual ministrations, the Society has had the pleasure of listening to discourses from Mrs. Livermore and Colonel Higginson, both of the United States ; from Dr. Andrew Wilson, an able representative of liberal thought in Scotland ; and from Mr. J. Allanson Picton, whose championship of religious freedom has made him well known to us all. The discourses too of Mr. Conway have been a continued source of pleasure and advantage to our members, the freshness and impartiality with which he has treated the numerous moral and social problems that are now engaging public attention, being appreciated by an ever widening circle of hearers. The Committee are also happy to state that an arduous literary labour of Mr. Conway's has during the past year been completed. For nearly twenty years the work on Demonology has engaged his anxious attention ; and the important character, scope, and object of this work can, perhaps, best be estimated by the following short quotation from the preface :—

“The natural world is overlaid by an unnatural religion, breeding bitterness around simplest thoughts, obstructions to science, estrangements not more reasonable than if they resulted from various notions of lunar figures,—all derived from the Devil-bequeathed dogma that certain beliefs and dis-beliefs are of infernal instigation. Dogmas moulded in a fossil demonology make the foundation of institutions which divert wealth, learning, and enterprise to fictitious ends.

“It has not, therefore, been mere intellectual curiosity which has kept me working at this subject these many years, but an increasing conviction that the sequelæ of such superstitions are exercising a still formidable influence.”

The musical arrangements, which have added so much to the attractiveness of South Place Chapel in the past, have

not been neglected during the past year; the Choir, under the direction of Herr Trousselle, having maintained its high character for efficiency.

In conclusion, the Committee congratulate the Members on the prosperous and successful nature of the year's progress, on the increased activity and earnestness displayed within the Society, and on the disposition shown to work harmoniously for common aims; and they see no reason why, with such forces at work, the character and influence of South Place Religious Society should not be indefinitely augmented as the years pass by.

NOTICE.

In accordance with the New Rules, seven members of the Committee (the rotation determinable by lot) will retire from office at the ensuing General Meeting, and are not eligible for re-election until next year. The members so retiring are Mrs. McMorran, Miss Williams, Mr. W. Burr, Mr. G. W. Cooke, Mr. E. R. Levey, Mr. W. J. Reynolds, and Mr. A. J. Waterlow; in addition to which Mr. R. G. Hember, Mr. P. Hickson, Mr. R. S. Johnson, and Mr. W. Shury have resigned office. The members, therefore, will have to elect eleven new members of Committee and two Auditors.

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS, SOUTH PLACE CHAPEL, FOR THE YEAR 1878.

GENERAL ACCOUNT.

Dr.	£	s.	d.	Cr.	£	s.	d.
Seat Rents	587	5	9	By Mr. Conway	500	0	0
Collections and Donations	134	6	1	" Choir	139	6	0
Sale of Hymn Books and Pamphlets	79	3	5	" Salaries	29	4	0
Rent of House	70	0	0	" Advertising	32	1	8
Soirée Committee	20	3	1	" Rates, Taxes and Insurance	26	11	11
Chapel Lettings	211	11	0	" Coals and Gas	25	2	6
Share of Advertisements for two years (Athenæum), and return of Taxes paid in excess	20	14	1	" Interest on Mortgage	126	2	4
				" Printing and Stationery	107	14	11
				" Sundries	56	14	4
				" Repairs	18	11	7
				" Loss on Annual Soirée	4	13	6
				" Tuning Organ	6	0	0
				" Balance carried to Hymn Book Account	51	0	8
	£1,123	3	5		£1,123	3	5

NEW SEATS AND HYMN BOOK ACCOUNT.

Balance from General Account	51	0	8
Balance due to Treasurer, 31st December, 1878 *	96	17	3
New Seats	£147	17	11
	£147	17	11

BENEVOLENT FUND,

Balance in hand 1st January, 1878	18	17	3½
Collection, December 29th, 1878.....	23	5	1
	£42	2	4½
Sundry Payments.....	17	10	0
Balance in hand, 31st December, 1878	24	12	4½
	£42	2	4½

* The Balance due to the Treasurer is more than covered by the unpaid seat rents due for 1878 (£61), and the Stock in hand of Hymn Books, valued at cost (£87).

GEORGE HICKSON, *Treasurer*.
 Examined by us, this 17th January, 1879, and found correct.
 ALEXR. MCMORRAN, } *Auditors*.
 J. A. LYON, }