

The Free Thinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.

THE BESANT BOOM.

THE *Daily Chronicle* is still booming Mrs. Besant and Theosophy. Interviews with the leaders of this fashionable craze, and communications from them, are printed in large type, whilst letters against it are printed in smaller characters and generally condensed. Nothing new has appeared in the correspondence, however, except a significant hint from an apparently well-informed writer that Madame Blavatsky was a Russian agent, and that Mrs. Besant is being unconsciously made use of by Madame's employers. So barren are the *Chronicle* columns on this fantastic subject that even Mrs. Besant's old friend, the *Pall Mall Gazette*, describes the whole business as "too silly for anything."

This Theosophic boom is a satire upon our age. It shows how little the masses of even fairly educated people are imbued with the positive spirit, and how powerful are the instincts inherited from the theological and metaphysical stages of human development.

A glance at the *personnel* of Theosophy in England will reveal its essentially insignificant character. Of the many ladies who scribble on its behalf in the public press we say nothing. The only two "leaders" of any importance are Mrs. Besant and her present *alter ego* Mr. Herbert Burrows. Mr. Burrows is a man of no very exceptional ability, though he possesses energy and a good opinion of himself. Mrs. Besant is able and accomplished and extremely eloquent. But her ability is that of the born advocate. She pleads like a clever Q.C. from a brief. She is always some one's disciple.

Mrs. Besant's arguments and attitude are sometimes childish. She makes statements about the Mahatma letters, and asks to be believed on account of her own honesty. This is a form of the confidence trick. The gentleman at the public-house bar says, "You trust me, old fellow, don't you?" "Yes." "Then let me hold your purse while you go round the corner." In the same way Mrs. Besant says, "I never deceived you, did I?" "No." "Then let me hold your mind while you go out of it."

Mr. Burrows follows the same line. Speaking of Madame Blavatsky, he tells the *Chronicle* that "The rules of life she taught us, and which she received from the Masters, are not those of a liar and forger." Surely this betrays great simplicity. Mr. Burrows seems to have no idea of the complexity of human character. If he takes the trouble to inquire, he will find that some of the most cruel persecutors have been the kindest of men, and that some of the worst frauds and forgeries have been executed by men who were perfectly honorable in everything but the interest of their church or party.

With respect to the Mahatma letters, Mr. Burrows says "I have seen them; they are in English." That is to settle it. But Mr. Burrows's "I" looms too large on his vision. Other people have "I's" as well as he, and they want to be satisfied. But neither Mrs. Besant nor Mr. Burrows will condescend to be

anything but oracular. "It is no use our submitting these to experts. That is all nonsense," exclaims Mr. Burrows, and we quite agree with him. Never lift the curtain in front of your mystery. It is perilous. Profane eyes see only what there is to be seen, and that is usually—nothing.

Passing by the empirical way, even to the point of quackery, in which Mrs. Besant and Mr. Burrows deal with the phenomena of hypnotism; passing by the pretty story of the hypnotised gentleman who saw through Mrs. Besant—that is, read a card on the other side of her body; we venture to press them for evidence of the "supernormal" powers of Theosophic adepts. Madame Blavatsky, in one of her big books, tells of an Eastern gentleman (it always happens in the East) who stood shooting at from a rifle at close quarters, and the bullet fell harmlessly to the ground. Is there any Theosophic adept who will stand this test? Is there one, indeed, who can use his "supernormal" powers to fathom any well-kept secret, or discover anything of the slightest use to mankind?

Mrs. Besant is rather more subtle than Mr. Burrows. She declares that the Masters and their advanced pupils keep their "supernormal" knowledge to themselves, lest it should be used for destructive purposes by wicked people. The adepts, we are told, could kill a man mysteriously without anybody knowing it. Yes, and an Englishman, with half a pound of dynamite, could just as mysteriously kill an African savage. But the mystery depends on the victim's ignorance. Mrs. Besant forgets that if the "supernormal" knowledge were generally diffused we should all be on our guard against the wicked people. "Supernormal" would meet "supernormal"—and then the tug of war!

But enough of this "nonsense," to use the language of Mr. Burrows. Let us turn to a graver matter. On Sunday last, after bidding a solemn farewell "for the rest of this life" to Secularists, Mrs. Besant lectured at Milton Hall for the N. W. London Branch of the National Secular Society. Her subject was "Crucified Saviors." But whatever her subject, she lectures on Theosophy. So the "Masters" were brought in, one of whom "visited England in 1851"—when Mrs. Besant was nursing dolls. At the finish the meeting was addressed on the subject of her "exclusion." Mrs. Besant did not apologise for having misrepresented the National Secular Society. She is always right, and apologising is beneath her dignity. "I cannot pledge myself," she said, "to keep within the principles of the National Secular Society." Who asked her to? She is not a member. She is not a Secularist. Her right to go where she likes is unquestioned. What we deny is the right she claims to use the platform of the party she has abandoned in order to attack its principles. This is an absurdity on her part, and to concede it would be a foolish weakness on ours. The Secular party will forget its principles, as well as its dignity, if it allows itself to be made the stalking-horse of Mrs. Besant and Theosophy. G. W. FOOTE.

THEOSOPHIC HUMBUG.

HUMBUG dies very hard. Few of us credit how deeply seated is superstition and credulity, inherited from barbarous ancestors. It seems so strange that a lady like Mrs. Besant should take up with such an exploded superstition as the belief in magic, that people are found to cry out, "There must be something in it." Theosophy, boomed in the silly season by the *Daily Chronicle*, threatens to become the fashionable fad, as though it and its originators had never been exposed. This has been done at least three or four times. First by Mme. Blavatsky's twelve years' friend and housekeeper, Mme. Coulomb, in her *Account of My Intercourse with Madame Blavatsky from 1872 to 1884, with a number of Letters and full explanation of Theosophic phenomena* (Elliot Stock). These letters were vainly repudiated as forgeries, but experts certified they were in the handwriting of Mme. Blavatsky. Indeed, if the final eloquent letter was forged, Mme. Coulomb must have a greater imaginative mind even than that exhibited by Browning in his "Sludge, the Medium."

Next, in the *Proceedings of the Society for Psychological Research*, for December 1885, the humbug built on forgery, fraud and foolery, was exposed with scientific completeness and exactitude. Mr. Richard Hodgson, sent out to India by the Society to investigate the alleged marvels, made a most careful examination and drew up an elaborate and candid report, with the conclusion that "the phenomena in question were actually due to fraudulent arrangements" (p. 313). Mrs. Besant pooh-poohs this report, which was accepted by the eminent men of the Society, most of whom are inclined to spiritism. Then Professor Elliot Coues, of the Smithsonian Institute, who was President of the Washington Theosophical Society, inflicted a scathing exposure in the columns of the *New York Sun* (July 20, 1890). Professor Coues tells the whole story of Mme. Blavatsky's secret life, of her marriages and liaisons, and of her employment in the Russian secret service. He says: "That I found the Theosophical Society a cesspool of filth and fraud, owned and operated by a few knaves at the expense of not many dupes, after all is not particularly to my credit. Average intelligence would discover that without difficulty." Mr. Foote, in his Open Letter to Madame Blavatsky, entitled *The New Cagliostro*, took up some of the salient points of the first two exposures. But the humbug still goes on. First, because there's money in it. Lots of folks with more money than brains are ever seeking something new. Theosophy offers the fascination of a mystery and the attraction of possibly gaining supernormal powers. But there is more behind it than even that. Modern Theosophy—the wisdom of God without either God or wisdom—is the invention of the late H. P. Blavatsky, a Russian subject by birth and by avocation a Russian spy. It was in that profession, according to Professor Coues, she went to New York in 1873, with a view to greater protection as an American citizen. She was instructed, as is usual, to play any part that would serve as a blind to her real objects. Here, as in Egypt, from which she was expelled by the police, previously she posed as a spiritist, and as such met Colonel Olcott, author of *People from Another World*. This worthy, who is hardly as innocent as he looks, obtained his title in the Secret Service of the United States. Afghan troubles took them both to India in the service of Russia.

The original design of the Theosophical Society in India was to induce the native princes, rajahs, and maharajahs to become fellows of the esoteric section, and with them prepare a revised edition of the Indian Mutiny, which was brought about not solely by greased cartridges, as some people think, but far more by industriously circulated prophecies from Mahatmas, that the rule of the British Feringees

would end in one hundred years from the battle of Plassy (June 23, 1757). Political events in the East are always worked in this way. The prophecies of the Messiah and restoration of the Jews were given out as inducements to their own political fulfilment. The approaching end of the Karmic cycle was the great esoteric doctrine of Theosophy, as that of the brotherhood of man was its exoteric fundamental. But though political motives were at the bottom of the establishment of the Theosophical Society, it did not end there. It proved to be a profitable business. Sir Jacob Sassoon, for instance, was eased of 10,000 rupees by the means described in *The New Cagliostro*. Nor is so versatile and clever an adventuress as Mme. Blavatsky summed up by calling her a Russian spy. She was learned in occult literature; she had given twenty years to the business, and had a natural aptitude for mystification. If not an initiate in the Sat Bhai, she was an apt scholar of T. Subba Row, and knew where Eastern thought had its strongest hold on the West. She had the virtues as well as the vices of her race, and delighted in fooling the "flap-doodles," as she called them. How she must have enjoyed inscribing her book to Herbert Burrows—"to my friend in a former incarnation." I lamented her death as sincerely as any Theosophist; for long study of the lady, as of some strange and dangerous animal, led to interest if not affection. What was more, I knew that while she lived there was a chance that Mrs. Besant might be undeceived. This her untimely death prevented, while her confederates and occult masters in St. Petersburg and India continue to utilise her dupes. Now the sorceress is gone there are many rival claimants for her mantle. Like Alexander's generals after his death, they may divide her conquests. Mr. Judge—accused by Professor Coues of being a fraudulent confederate—may take America. Colonel Olcott—who labors under equal suspicion—may take Ceylon and Japan; the Countess of Caithness, France; and Mrs. Besant will perhaps be induced to stay in India or visit Thibet until the coming cataclysm at the end of the century. Her *fidus Achates*, Mr. Herbert Burrows, should lead the movement in England. The foolerop is always abundant.

J. M. WHEELER.

THE BRADLAUGH MEMORIAL.

It would be imprudent to delay my promised explanation any longer, although I could have wished a time of greater leisure for the purpose. There seems little likelihood of its arriving, however, for the duties of the N. S. S. presidency are more absorbing and difficult than they have been for many years, and a good while must elapse before I see the end of the troublesome period following on Mr. Bradlaugh's death and Mrs. Besant's defection.

To explain this matter thoroughly I must go back a little. Three months ago Mr. R. O. Smith came to me as President of the N. S. S. and told me that it was his intention to free himself from his responsibilities at the Hall of Science. He had borne them for twenty-three years, and increased age and precarious health, as well as the claims of another business he had established in the city, made it impossible for him to bear the burden indefinitely. In order not to forfeit the value of the buildings he had applied for and obtained an extension of his lease. This was granted for 28 years certain, and for 86 years if £2,500 was spent in rebuilding the front premises within ten years. Mr. Smith offered to sell the whole of his interest, including the lease, the premises, the fixtures, and the furniture, for the sum of £2,000, of which he was willing to let £1,000 remain on mortgage at 5 per cent. It should be added that the ground rent under the new lease was £230 a year.

I weighed Mr. Smith's offer carefully, and I came to the conclusion that it was a capital bargain. I also reflected that the Bradlaugh Memorial Hall Company, Limited, was the only existing body that could possibly purchase. I further reflected that there seemed very little probability of raising money enough to obtain a freehold and build a handsome new Hall and Institute. The inquiries I made satisfied me as to the tremendous cost of such an undertaking. In the circumstances, therefore, I could not help thinking that the retention of the Hall of Science and the idea of a Memorial to Charles Bradlaugh could be harmonised. The party's interest and his honor might be provided for by a single stroke. Mr. Smith's offer might be accepted, the front premises might be rebuilt for the purposes of an Institute, and the Hall might be left standing until the money could be raised to rebuild it also.

Several meetings of the Directors considered the proposal I laid before them. It was supported by old workers and men of business like Mr. Reynolds, Mr. Forder, Mr. G. Standing, and Mr. George Anderson. But it was vehemently opposed by other directors from two distinct points of view; some declaring that the Hall of Science, even if rebuilt, was not good enough for the memory of Charles Bradlaugh, and others being apparently animated by a fanatical dislike of Mr. Smith, who had to listen to some very unpleasant observations—all of which I regarded, and still regard, as totally undeserved and absolutely irrelevant.

I could have carried my proposal by a bare majority if I had used my own voting powers. But this I would not do, although I was accused of "rushing" the proposal. Finally, Mr. Smith's offer, being virtually rejected, was withdrawn.

My next step was to lay the matter before the N. S. S. Executive, which at my suggestion appointed a Committee to wait on Mr. Smith with a view to negotiating for the purchase of his interest. Mr. Smith met the Committee in a friendly spirit, but he could no longer take £2,000. He had consulted a valuator, and found his interest in the lease more valuable than he had conceived, and he considered himself as making a sacrifice in offering to sell for £3,000. I did not feel able, however, to ask the Executive to face the raising of so much money; but I made an arrangement with Mr. Smith, which was unanimously ratified by the Executive, whereby the N. S. S. secured the use of the large Hall on Sundays and Thursday nights for a period of twelve months. This was so far satisfactory; yet I had the mortification of seeing that my opponents had caused a loss of £1,000 in the negotiations with Mr. Smith.

Meanwhile I allowed the matter to rest, trusting that the opposition would die away. During this interval I received a letter from G. J. Holyoake for insertion in the *Freethinker*. I did not insert it, however, for I was resolved to raise no public discussion until I had appealed to the shareholders. But I kept Mr. Holyoake's letter, and I now publish it with his permission.

THE BRADLAUGH MEMORIAL AND THE HALL OF SCIENCE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

Dear Sir,—Of all the possible sites for the Bradlaugh Memorial Hall, it seems to me that the present Hall of Science would be the best.

1. Because known and familiar, and Old-street will improve year by year.
2. Because situated where audiences can be calculated upon.
3. Because thrice the sum that site would cost would be needed to build a new Hall elsewhere or buy one with equal advantages.
4. Above all, because the Hall of Science has been consecrated by Bradlaugh's career in it. Whitfield's Chapel, in Tottenham-court-road, is cherished from generation to generation because it was on *that spot* he made his fame. In the Hall of Science Bradlaugh made his. The sentiment of those who regard him everywhere takes most pride in that spot. The associations of the Hall of Science are its fortune, worth

fifty times more fifty years hence. Buy or build elsewhere, you cannot take the associations there nor create them.

Faithfully yours, G. J. HOLYOAKE.

On Tuesday evening, August 25, I met the first meeting of shareholders. The opposition I found had *not* died away; it was more vehement than ever, and if possible less practical. Had I been less used to presiding the meeting would have broken up in disorder. Shareholders had been made suddenly for the mere purpose of voting against any purchase from Mr. Smith. Among the new comers was Mrs. Bonner. She had a right to be there if she chose, but I think her presence was ill-advised. My resolution in favor of purchasing the Hall of Science at a reasonable price would have been defeated had she stayed away, but her amendment gave a certain measure of dignity to the opposition. Yet her amendment, on becoming a substantive resolution, was itself defeated by "the previous question." And thus the shareholders, like the directors, ended by doing nothing. They resolved, it would seem, on waiting, which is the easiest form of effort I know.

The majority of that meeting, if weighed as well as counted, was in my opinion not equal to the minority. I did not regard it as really representative of the Freethought party. If I had, I should have been obliged to consider how far I had the party's confidence. By further effort I had no doubt I could have got the decision reversed. But I had several reasons for not undertaking the task; one of them being in itself sufficient. The truth is, I am already overworked; the duties of the Presidency make such a heavy demand on my time and means as to be a very serious burden; and I had experienced more trouble from the Company than from any other part of my responsibilities.

After very careful reflection I desired Mr. Forder to call a meeting of the new Board on Thursday, September 3, at which I tendered my resignation as director. I explained that the majority of the new Board was pledged to do nothing but wait, and could easily dispense with my assistance; further, that I still regarded the retention of the Hall of Science as vital to our movement, and I was bound to do the duty nearest hand. I was therefore taking steps to form a Syndicate for that purpose. Messrs. Forder, Reynolds, Standing, and Truelove also resigned, and I understand that Mr. George Anderson intends to do the same. The other members of the Board are thus left to face a situation of their own creating.

The next day I met the gentlemen who will join me on the Syndicate. The matter is being pushed forward rapidly, and an announcement will be made in the next number of the *Freethinker*.

Meanwhile I have had the Memorial Fund—that is, the donations of subscribers—banked at the Birkbeck in the names of Mr. George Anderson, Mr. W. H. Reynolds, and myself. This is done by order of the Executive. That money will never be drawn until the N. S. S. approves its investment; or, failing that, until the subscribers are consulted; and, of course, it will never be used for any other purpose than the one it was collected for.

I cannot conclude without noticing Mrs. Bonner's remarks in her journal. It is hateful to me to bear any appearance of squabbling with Mr. Bradlaugh's daughter, but the difference is none of my seeking.

Mrs. Bonner states that she is not now a member of the N. S. S. This is to be regretted, though it is not a novel piece of information, as she resigned when her father relinquished the Presidency. What she does not state is that Mr. Forder asked her if she would serve on the Memorial Committee, but could never obtain her answer. Her object in becoming a shareholder of the Company was to assert herself as "the guardian of her dead father's name." But does she seriously think that men like Mr. Forder, Mr. Reynolds, Mr. Standing, and Mr. George Anderson (I say nothing of myself), are in a conspiracy against

her father's memory? Or does she seriously imagine that her father's memory, among his Old Guard, is in such a delicate state of health as to need her nursing?

Mr. Bradlaugh's daughter does not appear to have read carefully the Memorial appeals to which I have put my name. They are in print, and if she consults them she will find that they are solely addressed to the "Freethinkers of Great Britain and Ireland." Who cares merely to see Charles Bradlaugh's name across the front of a building? What I care for, what other Freethinkers care for, is the work that goes on inside the building. The object of the Memorial was stated to be the maintenance and propagation of the convictions that were the inspiration of Mr. Bradlaugh's life.

Certainly the National Secular Society and the Company are two distinct bodies. But why? Simply owing to the infamous state of the law. Had the N. S. S. been a legal body no Company would have been formed.

Why too does Mrs. Bonner try to belittle the Hall of Science? Say what she will, it was the scene of her father's greatest Freethought triumphs. It afforded him his one secure platform; there his supporters knew they could find him; there his great Trafalgar Square and Hyde Park meetings were organised. While Mrs. Bonner was a child he spent many anxious days and nights in obtaining the use of the Hall of Science, and I will spend many anxious days and nights rather than see it lost to his party. This she bids me do if I can, but she objects to using money raised in connection with her father's name for the purpose. Well, she has a right to her opinion; but I tell her that she is unwittingly doing her best to wreck the Bradlaugh Memorial. The Hall of Science scheme is the only one we can grasp, and if the place was good enough for her father living, it cannot—especially when rebuilt—be a disgrace to him dead. Money will never be forthcoming for the grandiose scheme she contemplates. And when she talks of waiting ten, or even thirty, years she is hopelessly impracticable. Her reference to the Paine Memorial Hall is quite irrelevant. It was built with the money of one rich man, the millionaire Lick, and it belongs to one man, Mr. Mendum.

Thirty years of waiting, subscribing, and draining the Freethought party, does not commend itself to me. I see the ordinary income of the N. S. S. already affected. Less comes in every month while special subscriptions are open. I am confident, also, that whatever Memorial we raise to Charles Bradlaugh must be raised in the immediate future.

To the subscribers I say this—Your money is safe. To the shareholders I say—Yours is also safe. I am still a shareholder, and the Memorial Company can do little, if anything, for the present, unless it come round to the only possible project. This it may do presently, and meanwhile I watch its course while securing the Hall of Science, which can only be secured for our use by being secured as a property. To the National Secular Society I say—I am your President until you remove me from the office, and I will be no dummy President. I will work and strike hard for your welfare, and I will brook no interference, nor attach too much importance to advice, from those who for whatever reasons stand outside your pale. In return I ask your trust. Give it to your President till you find him dishonest or incapable; otherwise you will mark time instead of making progress, debate without moving, and waste your strength in aimless endeavor.

G. W. FOOTE.

In the past men have cared more for the infallibility of their Bible than for the morality of their God. And unless before very long there be a change in this respect, I fear that religion will be swept from off the face of the earth.—*Prof. A. W. Momerie, "Church and Creed,"* p. 241.

ACID DROPS.

Any Freethought leader who deserts Secularism is petted by the Christians. This explains the great prominence given to Mrs. Besant's vagaries in the newspapers. Of course we except the *Daily Chronicle*, which is booming Theosophy for two reasons; first, Mrs. Besant has a friend in the office, a Pantheistic gentleman, cut out by nature for a curate, who has strayed into politics; second, this is the dull season, when newspapers must get hold of some speciality in default of the sea-serpent and the phenomenal gooseberry.

Mr. Foote has written letters to several papers, not discussing Theosophy, but correcting Mrs. Besant's misrepresentations of the Secular party. The *Chronicle*, the *Echo*, and other journals inserted his communications. His letter to the *Freeman's Journal*, however, does not seem to have appeared. Mr. Foote pointed out that so far from the Secularists applauding Mrs. Besant's "wonders," they are actually accused of "expelling" her, although in reality she had withdrawn from them as a hard hearted set who reject her miracles as well as those of Christianity. The *Freeman*, however, inserts a letter from Mr. C. H. Kelf, formerly of Newcastle and now of Cork. Mr. Kelf thoroughly exposes the nonsense about "persecution," and shows that the Secular party has treated Mrs. Besant with great indulgence.

The *Scarborough Evening News* falls into the same error as its Irish contemporary. It speaks of "a gullible crowd of Secularists who would have scoffed at the miracles of the Bible" as swallowing Mrs. Besant's wonders with "open-mouthed awe." This is a very laughable blunder. Secularists are not gullible, and they show their disbelief in Mrs. Besant's hocus-pocus by refusing to become Theosophists. As Mr. Forder pointed out, the only two converts she boasts of never belonged to the Secular party. One was a Unitarian and the other a Catholic.

The *Record* falls into the same blunder. "It is one of the contradictions of which unbelief is full," says this high-and-dry organ of Evangelicalism, "that people who stumble at the miracles of Christ will accept with gaping credulity the trickery and profanities of Theosophy." Had the editor of the *Record* read the *Freethinker*—as he ought to, to relieve his own dullness—he would have noticed that we have more than once declared the "miracles" of Jesus Christ to be far preferable to the "marvels" of Theosophy.

The *Boston Guardian*, after reproducing the *Chronicle* report of Mrs. Besant's lecture at the Hall of Science, gives half a column of "Mr. G. W. Foote on Theosophy." The writer refers to Mr. Foote's "witty" and "coarse" onslaught upon Christianity. We will dispute neither epithet, but we must correct the matter-of-fact statement that Mr. Foote was "sentenced by Mr. Justice North to twelve months' hard labor for blasphemy." Blasphemy is not a felony, but a misdemeanor, and does not involve "hard labor."

The intention of this writer, of course, is to prejudice Mr. Foote. If he were honest and impartial, he would also state that Mrs. Besant was sentenced to six months' imprisonment for publishing what the jury called an obscene pamphlet. For our part, we laugh at both verdicts—Mrs. Besant's and our own. We are sure that nobody in his senses thinks either of us guilty of any crime. But if the one case is paraded, why is the other forgotten?

The *Leeds Express* made the remarkable discovery that the Secularists have become afraid of Mrs. Besant. Mr. J. G. Fisher pointed out in reply that it might as well be said that "a Church is afraid of those it excommunicates for heresy." The conclusion of his letter will be generally, if not universally, endorsed by Secularists:—"Mrs. Besant is loved and even trusted, as far as her integrity is concerned, by very many of those who decline to admit her at present as their intellectual representative. With deep sorrow they see this noble and, as was believed, robust mind entangled with what they regard as an incomprehensible compound of oriental mystical nonsense and fraudulent jugglery; and from this they are bound in honor and in good faith to dissent publicly. As a recognised advocate they bid Mrs. Besant farewell."

While admitting Mrs. Besant's "high intellectual attainments," the *Midland Evening News* says she "is not a lady

remarkable for stability of purpose or consistent adherence to any particular set of opinions." After hoping that she will exhibit a Mahatma in London, it concludes a long article as follows: "Certainly, she will have to adduce some tangible, intelligible proof in support of Theosophy, and of the extraordinary statements she makes as to the annihilation of time and distance, or cynics will say she is becoming weak in the head and beginning to talk arrant nonsense."

The *Sheffield Independent* gives currency to the fable that "the Secular Society has passed a rule that no speaker be permitted in the hall to say anything against the principles of the Society." This is the rule in all churches and chapels, but not at the Hall of Science. Sunday evenings are reserved for our special propaganda, and Sunday mornings for an open platform. A Christian clergyman is actually going to lecture at the Hall of Science in November. Theosophists may also have a hearing, subject to the condition of courteous discussion.

There is really more liberty in the ranks of organised Christianity, thinks the *Sheffield Independent*, than in the ranks of organised Secularism. Fudge, sir, fudge! Have the organised Christians offered Mrs. Besant their own pulpits? Oh no! Their "liberty," like their salvation, is vicarious.

Advantage is taken by the *Sheffield Independent* of Mrs. Besant's statement that "aggressive Atheism is declining." Of course the statement only expresses her personal opinion—even if it does that. She did not express it while Charles Bradlaugh lived. Now he is dead she feels free to have her fling at his party. Every disparaging observation of hers will be echoed by the Christians from end to end of Great Britain.

The *Speaker* has a scathing article on "The Methods of the Mahatmas." Awful fun is poked at Mrs. B.'s asking for belief without evidence, and the Mahatmas who precipitate letters and dispatch them by "supernormal" agency, are charged with defrauding the Post Office. If Mrs. Besant had any sense of humor the article would make her wince. But if she had any sense of humor she would not be a Theosophist.

Says the *Weekly Dispatch*: "Surely too much fuss is being made over Mrs. Besant's repudiation of Agnosticism and her adoption of Theosophy. A woman of energy and noble feelings and impulses, but with a heart-hunger unsatisfied, is pretty sure to go through all the heresies and all the quackeries till she settles down finally and comfortably in the Roman Catholic Church. All roads for such a mind end in Rome, even the one that goes through Thibet. Let us point out, however, that Mrs. Besant's illusions are not singular. It will be remembered that even a rich and keen-witted Jew, well known in society, was humbugged by Madame Blavatsky as completely as Mrs. Besant has been, and parted with many shekels to the Russian adventuress. For, like many doubters, he "wanted a sign" that the Mahatmas really existed, and offered ten thousand rupees for one. Madame Blavatsky provided a sign accordingly, in the form of a telegram to her from a great Mahatma in Thibet. The various steps in the transaction were fully examined, and the evidence of the swindle is absolutely complete."

Arthur Desmond, late colonel in the Madras Engineers, wrote a long letter to the *Star*. He is a Theosophist who has gone further than Mrs. Besant. While she is sworn to secrecy, he is ready to give a public performance, and to "demonstrate the possession of powers utterly beyond the grasp of materialistic capability." He concluded by saying that he was anxious to debate with a champion of "blatant materialism," and particularly with the President of the National Secular Society. Mr. Foote replied that he made it a rule only to debate with persons of representative capacity. If the Theosophists would put Colonel Desmond forward, a debate could be arranged; but why not put forward Mrs. Besant?

Colonel Olcott is not to be outdone by Mrs. Besant, or rather he outdoes her; for while she knew nothing of Madame Blavatsky's death till she heard of it on touching at Queens-town, on her return from America, the Colonel says he learnt the news from occult sources before receiving a message by cable. "It was always understood that I was to outlive her," he says; so it is to be presumed they settled the matter between them. Colonel Olcott also declares that he spent

some time in the room with the Blavatsky's corpse, and it was revealed to him what he was to do, and he is doing it. Amen.

The *Birmingham Daily Mail* says: "We have often wondered why Smith, to whom we lent £5 a year ago could never see us as he passed us in the street, but now our wonder has vanished. The poor fellow was under the thumb of some Theosophist, who had thrown him into a hypnotic trance, and told him when he woke he would not see us." Theosophy explains much.

Prof. Patterson, of the Madras Christian College, who exposed Madame Blavatsky in that city, has been interviewed at Bristol on the subject of Theosophy, which he says is a failing cause in India. The Mahatma letters, he declared, "were by no means private. I have had many of them in my possession. They were for the most part written on a kind of Chinese vellum; some, however, were on ordinary note paper. They were mostly written in blue lead pencil. Some were beautifully engrossed in Sanskrit." Prof. Patterson holds that Madame Blavatsky had confederates in the production of the letters, and confidently ascribes one to Damodar, a Hindu protégé of Madame Blavatsky.

What with the Mahatma marvels and a million pilgrims to the Holy Coat at Trèves, it is evident the Americans are right in their saying, "There is always plenty of work for the fool killer." Christian training has left people with such dense ignorance and credulity that it can be cut off in thick slices.

Mrs. John B. Martin, the female Christ of Cincinnati, was for many years a pillar of Methodism in that city. She attained Messiahship gradually—first she felt conversion, then justification, then sanctification, then perfection. Finally she announced that she was Christ come to earth again, never to die, and that her converts would be rulers in the new kingdom. She has as yet escaped a lunatic asylum, and is coming over to Europe, where she will find plenty of cranks and possible followers. Perhaps Mr. Massingham will boom her claims in the *Daily Chronicle*.

The collapse of the Bishop of London's "Brotherhood of St. Paul" has been explained. The Brotherhood, it appears, started work in a street in Lisson-grove, made famous by holy W. T. Stead having there shown how easily Eliza Armstrong might have been seduced. They were fairly driven out, despite the use of all known insecticides, by creeping things innumerable. Some of the brethren retired at once, and the rest have gone to Wales for a change. To succumb before fleas is the pitiful result of a high and holy endeavor.

Says the *Church Times*: "Education not based upon revelation, and that ignores the relation of the individual to God and man, is not education at all." This should be translated, "We dislike all education save that under our own clerical control."

Religious animosity has led to serious disturbances between Bulgarians and Greeks, owing to the fact that a Bulgarian child had been buried in the Greek cemetery. The Greeks considered this a contamination, exhumed the body, and threw it over the churchyard wall.

In the Life of that erratic traveller Laurence Oliphant, he has a little slap at the missionaries. Speaking of those in China, he says (vol. i., p. 229): "They have gorgeous houses, wives and families. A missionary here with a wife and four children gets a house as big as Spring-grove, rent free, and £500 a year, and that is called giving up all for the sake of the heathen."

A writer on the *Standard* has interviewed Miss Golding, the lady whose escape from a French convent was related by her solicitors in a letter to the *Times*. It appears she had paid £20 a week, or £1,000 a year, for twenty-five years, for the privilege of being a bride of Christ. She was badly clothed and fed, and never had a penny piece. Worse, she was ill-used. No aid was offered her when ill, until she happily informed them that her money would go to her relatives, and then some kindness was offered with a view of making her alter her will.

"Punishment," she says, "consists in what is called 'sore throat.' Some decoction is given you in your food—you do not know when nor where—and this is continued. Your throat gets parched; the next day you are feverish; the following day dizzy; the cold settles on your lungs, you take to bed, and there you are told to prepare for death." The nuns never live beyond the age of forty, and Miss Golding avers "It is the custom in such convents for the commonest, coarsest, most brutal woman to be appointed Lady Superior, so that she may tyrannise over the girls who are of gentle birth and breeding." A nice result of separation from the world to become brides of Christ.

Miss Golding, who is said to be the daughter of a Kentish clergyman converted to Catholicism, and who has friends at Hull, where the celebrated similar Starr and Saurin case occurred about twenty years ago, is to be congratulated on her forcible divorce from her celestial bridegroom.

At Trèves the windows of a shop where sacred objects were sold a placard was exhibited with the inscription, "This shop is closed in consequence of clerical competition." The priests did not get up the Holy Coat show for the benefit of tradespeople.

Another clergyman, the Rev. G. Osett, rector of Thwaite, in Norfolk, has committed suicide. He lived all alone at the rectory, his wife and child residing elsewhere.

On and Off Duty, the monthly organ of evangelical policemen, wants a little money for a birthday present—it is eight years old. It determined to "ask the policemen." If each would give a shilling, as it points out, a considerable sum would be raised, but it modestly says, "Let each one ask God first what his will is in the matter." We further advise them to wait until they have a written answer.

Here is T. L. Harris, the prophet, founder of the Brotherhood of the New Life who ensnared L. Oliphant much as Mdme. Blavatsky did Mrs. Besant, though happily he escaped at last, now proclaiming that he has got the new life and has attained immortality in the flesh. A similar claim is put forward by Cyrus Teed, the founder of the sect of Koreshans, whose headquarters are at San Francisco.

The *English Churchman* gives an account of the poisoning of a Roman Catholic priest by means of a consecrated wafer. Jesus Christ is said to have predicted that his disciples could take any deadly thing without it hurting them, but his own "flesh, blood, bones and divinity" has often proved the agent of deadly murder.

Such a vigorous censorship is exercised over the railway bookstalls of "Old Morality," W. H. Smith, that Mr. E. Downey's *Voyage of the Ark* was excluded, lest it should suggest a Bible burlesque. Yet the *Nineteenth Century* has to be sold even when it contains papers by that arch-heretic Huxley.

Spiritualists have been holding a camp meeting at Onset Bay, Mass. Mrs. Etta Roberts was one of the most prominent mediums present. She would get into a wire cage, locked and sealed, and then apparently impossible things would occur. Last week the fraudulent character of her performances were fully exposed. Do you think the exposure shook the faith of the Spiritualists? Not at all. They said that the exposure only proved that Mrs. Roberts, in one particular instance, acted fraudulently, but that it did not prove that she is not, at times, a genuine medium, or that other mediums are frauds.

In order to shake the faith of the Spiritualist you would have to prove that every medium, in each of his or her performances, was a fraud. As long as one medium, or one "manifestation," is left unexposed, there will be believers in the alleged phenomena of Spiritualism. Spiritualists do not require proof that what they believe is true. They require that what they believe shall be disproved, which is impossible. Spiritualism, like all other religions, demands that the negative shall be proved. It is based on what cannot be disproved, instead of on what can be proved, or on what rests on, at least, good evidence.—*Twentieth Century*.

A wandering itinerant vagabond, with "well-worn Bible

and license to preach as a Freewill Baptist," was arrested in Johnson County recently, for attempting to rape Miss Mary McWilliams, aged 14." Perhaps he had just been reading the story of Judah and Tamar, or the efforts to revive King David when dying.—*Blackburn's Free South*, Little Rock (Ark.), Aug. 15.

Some time ago we attended a Positivist wedding, conducted by Frederic Harrison, at Newton Hall, Fetter-lane. We were disappointed, not to say disgusted, to find Mr. Harrison used the English Church Service with the vow of obedience for the wife and not for the husband. It is, therefore, no surprise to find that he takes very conservative views of "The Functions of Woman," upon which he has recently been lecturing.

It is shocking to find the pious editor of the *English Churchman* writing irreverently of his Savior's shirt. He accuses the pilgrims to Trèves of gross superstition. Think of a religious editor, who believes in the resurrection, the atonement and Satanic agency, denouncing superstition. According to this pious paper, Trèves is rife with drunkenness, and reminds one of the Crystal Palace on a bank holiday,

We have received a long cadging letter from the Religious Tract Society, with a stamped, directed envelope in which to forward our donation. Surely an enemy hath done this. We can hardly believe the letter reached us direct from the society's office. Anyhow, the stamp will be used for another purpose.

Jacques has already matched his Savior's record and done a forty days' fast. He is going on for another ten days to outdo all previous records.

"Why has the Young Men's Christian Association Failed?" is the heading of an article in the *Christian Commonwealth*. The article itself is pretty warm, and the failure seems certain, whatever may be the explanation.

Jesus Christ rode into Jerusalem on a couple of jackasses. General Booth rode into Kimberley in an open carriage, drawn by four magnificent white horses. The first Salvation Army didn't pay as well as the present one.

Hugh Price Hughes likewise takes the shine out of J. C. According to the *Methodist Times* "the directors of the Inman Line have, with much courtesy, placed at Mr. Price Hughes's disposal a commodious cabin in the magnificent 'City of New York.'" That is how Price Hughes goes to America. J. C. would have had to go steerage.

SECULARISM USEFUL.

The theologians, finding themselves unable to answer the arguments that have been urged, resort to the old subterfuge—to the old cry that Agnosticism takes something of value from the life of man. Does the Agnostic take any consolation from the world? Does he blot out or dim one star in the heaven of hope? Can there be anything more consoling than to feel, to know, that Jehovah is not God—that the message of the Old Testament is not from the Infinite? Is it not enough to fill the brain with a happiness unspeakable to know that the words, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire," will never be spoken to one of the children of men? Is it a small thing to lift from the shoulders of industry the burdens of superstition? Is it a little thing to drive the monster of fear from the hearts of men?—K. G. Ingersoll, "*Christ and Miracles*."

HOW TO HELP US.

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

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, September 13, at 11.30, Victoria Park (near the fountain), "Heaven and Hell." At 7, Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, E.C., "What Does Mrs. Besant Mean?"

Sept. 20, morning, Clerkenwell-green; evening, Hall of Science. 27, Manchester.

October 4, 11, 18, Hall of Science. 25, Camberwell.

November 1, Portsmouth; 15, Leicester.

December 6, Hall of Science; 27, Hall of Science.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS' ENGAGEMENTS.—September 13, South Shields; 14, North Shields; 15, Blyth district; 16, Sunderland; 17, Middlesbro'; 18, Crook; 19, Chester-le-Street; 20, Newcastle-on-Tyne; 27, Birmingham. October 4, Birmingham; 11, Manchester; 18, Birmingham; 25, Hall of Science. November 1, Hall of Science; 8, Birmingham; 15, Birmingham; 22, Portsmouth. December 6 and 13, Birmingham; 20 and 21, Leicester.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent direct to him at 17 Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, London, E.C.

F. P.—Pleased to hear you strongly approve our article. Thanks for the Australian information.

J. ELIAS.—Thanks for the explanation. You certainly seem to have found the key to the secret.

P. STRZELECKI.—Your excellent letter in the *Chronicle* should set the matter right on the Tyneside.

HUMANITAS.—Mr. Foote sent a correction to the *Freeman's Journal*. Thanks for your attention.

G. W. C.—It seems from a comparison of Judges viii., 30, with Judges ix., 18, that Abimelech must have killed Jothan if not himself to make up the threescore and ten sons. But perhaps Jothan and Abimelech came alive again, like the Egyptian cattle after the plagues, and the Amalekites who were exterminated over and over again.

C. K. LAPORTE.—We have given enough attention for the present to Christ's old coat.

J. EASTON.—We are over-crowded with copy just now.

E. J. DAVIS.—Your letter is not over civil, but we make allowance for Christians. You say this journal should be called the *Blasphemer*. Call it so if you like. We prefer the present title.—Christianity is not proved to be true by the fact of its having 275,000,000 of adherents. Buddhism has more.—When you say that Freethought can get no footing in Catholic countries you forget France. Try again.

A. LORD.—Sorry to hear that Messrs. Atkey and Stapleton have resigned from the Nottingham Branch, but glad to hear that no further secessions have occurred. Both gentlemen have acted hastily. Mrs. Besant has not been "excluded." On this matter the *National Reformer* is at one with the *Freethinker*. We hope Messrs. Atkey and Stapleton will see their way to return.—Mr. Foote will offer you a date in a few days.

MAJAKARMA sends some extracts from the *Freethinker's Text-Book*, expressing Mrs. Besant's contempt of miracles in 1876. One of them declares that the fact of Jesus avoiding publicity in respect to his miracles shows that they never happened. Our correspondent is aware that she objects to the Theosophic marvels being called "miracles," but he says "they are nothing less to outsiders who are denied critical investigation."

W. ELDER.—Thanks for your trouble. Will the newsagent exhibit a contents-sheet if we send one?—This correspondent writes:—"I have read with attention Mrs. Besant's *Why I became a Theosophist*, but fail to find a single argument or reason therein to make me "take on" with the superstitious craze she therein pleads for; or to shake the materialistic conclusions I have reached and had confirmed by her able, eloquent writing and pleading."

W. DAVIS.—We have not the *N. R.* file by us at the present moment.

H. SMITH (Farsley).—You may rely upon Mr. Foote's keeping a firm hand on the business. Outsiders, whoever they are, shall not interfere with N. S. S. affairs while he is President. See the article elsewhere.

S. G. GRANT writes:—"If Mrs. Besant could not serve under a lesser man than 'the greatest President the N. S. S. has had or is likely to have,' I fail to see how the Society has expelled her."

G. M.—Such letters to the local press are of the greatest service.

A. GUEST.—Abraham Lincoln's heterodox views have often been noted in the *Freethinker*. Glad to hear the great President's Freethought is admitted in the current *Westminster Review*.

E. ANDERSON.—It is pleasant to hear of the progress made at Stratford, and that the rowdiness is kept in check. No doubt the Secularists will continue to support the committee.

W. HENRY.—Under consideration.

J. BRIDLEY endorses every word of our last week's article, and wonders where Mrs. Besant is going. The *Weekly Dispatch*

prophesies that she will end her career in the Catholic Church. But that Church offers women nothing except silence and self-sacrifice.

DANIEL BAKER (Birmingham), an N. S. S. vice-president, thanks Mr. Foote for his outspoken article on Mrs. Besant.

E. EBBELS.—Thanks. But we dealt with it last week.

HUMANITARIAN suggests that, in view of the hard winter that seems approaching, Freethinkers should contribute as liberally as possible to the Benevolent Fund, and also send their cast-off clothes for distribution among the poorer members. We may add that Mr. Forder has for years distributed such things. He will gladly receive any that may be sent to him at 28 Stonecutter-street.

A. TARN.—We are unable to find space for political announcements.

MANX FRIEND.—You will find the real facts of Thomas Paine's last moments in *Infidel Death-Beds*. There was no need for him to "confess a god," for he was a Deist.

H. J. (Manchester).—Sorry we cannot find room for your sensible letter.

A. S. STAINES.—Quite right. The big drum is not among the instruments for praising the Lord prescribed in the Bible. But its monotonous sound appeals to the savage in civilised men. Hence its use by the Salvationists.

W. LAKE.—Pleased to know our article is appreciated, and that its "moderation" is thought greater than "could be expected." We note your prophecy.

R. G. LEES.—Shall be glad to count on your support. See the article on the subject in another column. The other matter shall be seen to.

BLYTH SECULARIST.—Free education is optional. School Boards may or may not avail themselves of the new form of Government assistance. You have no personal remedy. The fee must be paid if exacted.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Fritankaren—Liberty—Freethought—Ironclad Age—Menschentum—Echo—Neues Frereligioses Sonntags-Blatt—Freidenker—The Liberator—Der Arme Teufel—Secular Thought—Boston Investigator—Western Figaro—La Vérité Philosophique—Progressive Thinker—Truthseeker—Flaming Sword—Loyal American—Better Way Sunday Chronicle—New York Truth—Church Reformer—Jarrow Guardian—Johannesburg Star—On and Off Duty—Portsmouth Evening News—Leeds Evening Express—Leeds Mercury—Boston Guardian—Scarborough Evening News—Daily News—Freeman's Journal—Midland Evening News—Sheffield Independent—Daily Chronicle—Star—Reynolds's Newspaper—Newcastle Daily Journal—Birmingham Daily Mail—Twentieth Century—Auckland Chronicle—Weekly Bulletin—South American Journal—Indian War Cry—San Francisco Morning Call—Plowshare and Pruning Hook—Arbroath Herald—Jarrow Express.

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.

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.

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.

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.

SUGAR PLUMS.

Mrs. Besant's last lecture at the London Hall of Science must not be allowed to go without a full reply. Mr. Foote will lecture there to-night (Sept. 13) on "What Does Mrs. Besant Mean?" He will also deal with the lady's letters and revelations in the *Chronicle*.

Mr. Foote delivers another open-air address at Victoria Park in the morning. It is to be hoped he will be in good condition. On Friday last he was seized with influenza. It was subdued in time for his lectures at Birmingham, which cost him a great effort, but it has not yet left him, and his throat and chest are very tender.

Sunday opened well at Baskerville Hall, Birmingham. There was an exceptionally good morning audience. But the

rains descended and the floods came and somewhat thinned the afternoon and evening meetings. Mr. Foote urged upon the local Freethinkers the necessity of supporting Mr. Watts, and his remarks were greeted with applause. He said he knew there were difficulties about such a scheme, but if they were dealt with in a wise and generous spirit they would settle themselves in practice.

Last week Mr. Charles Watts lectured in Paisley and Hamilton. At the first named place the audience was rather small, the rain coming down in torrents during the meeting. At Hamilton the hall was crowded, friends coming from miles round to give Mr. Watts a hearty greeting on his return to this country. Many manifestations of approval, we are assured, were given of the course taken by this journal upon the question of Theosophy.

On Sunday Mr. Watts opened the new Secular Hall in Brunswick-street, Glasgow, and met with a warm Scotch reception. He lectured three times to good audiences in spite of the pouring rain. In the evening the hall was full, and an attempt was made at debate after two of the lectures. The sale of literature was good, every copy of the *Freethinker* was readily caught up and many more could have been sold. The Glasgow Branch is doing excellent service.

In the evening, replying to a gentleman in the audience, Mr. Watts said that he fully endorsed Mr. Foote's article in last week's *Freethinker*, "Mrs. Besant Gone." This announcement was received with tremendous cheering. While, observed Mr. Watts, Secularism allows the fullest expression of opinion, it could not officially sanction the advocacy of every "fad" which was an insult to reason and that set at defiance every law of evidence. He complimented Mr. Foote upon the able and dignified course he was taking upon this subject.

The Executive Committee of the Toronto Secular Society have unanimously passed the following resolution: "Resolved, —That, in accepting the resignation of Mr. Charles Watts as President of the Toronto Secular Society, the members of this Committee desire to place on record their keen appreciation of the immense services he has rendered to the cause of Freethought in Canada during his residence here; and, while regretting the loss the Society will sustain by his resignation, desire to convey to him their heartiest wishes for the happiness of himself and his family, and for his complete success in the new sphere of duty on which he has entered."

Mr. Foote has received the following in aid of the scheme for settling Mr. Charles Watts at Birmingham:—F. S., £10; W. H. Wood, 10s.

Mr. Charles Watts's first article for the *Freethinker* will appear next week in the form of an Address to the Secular Party.

The *Johannesburg Star* devoted a leaderette to Mr. Foote's *Salvation Syrup*. It predicted that General Booth would not be injured in South Africa by a Freethinker who had been imprisoned twelve months for blasphemy and obscenity. In reply to this falsehood our old friend Mr. R. S. Seago pointed out that Mr. Foote was imprisoned for blasphemy but not for obscenity. Thereupon the editor crawled away from his responsibility. He does not mean by "obscenity" what Mr. Seago means, and adds that "it is needless to say Mr. Foote was prosecuted for blasphemy, and not for obscenity." We thank friend Seago for checking our slanderers in South Africa.

It is pleasant to find a gleam of sense and fairness among the Christian journals, in regard to Mrs. Besant's charge of "bigotry" against her old Secular colleagues. The *British Weekly*, one of the ablest organs of the Christian press, writes as follows: "It is not often that we agree with Mr. G. W. Foote, President of the National Secular Society, but surely he is right when he declares that Mrs. Besant's only remaining object in standing on a Secular platform is to preach Theosophy."

Among the letters that have appeared in the press in explanation of the Secularists' attitude towards Mrs. Besant, none is superior to Mr. George Standing's which appeared in the *Pall Mall Gazette*. It was clear and emphatic, but quite

polite, with a graceful irony between the lines. It is a pity that Mr. Standing's pen is not more actively employed.

Many Freethinkers in the Channel Squadron are anxious to obtain the *Freethinker* when they go ashore at Weymouth from Portland Roads. Is there any newsagent in the town who supplies it? Can any reader tell us?

Mr. W. Dunn, M.P. for Paisley, after reading Mr. Bradlaugh's pamphlet on the "Laws Relating to Blasphemy and Heresy," says that he did not previously understand the question, but he is now prepared to vote for the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws. Mr. W. Elder, a sturdy Freethinker and one of Mr. Bradlaugh's most ardent supporters, has been instrumental in obtaining this promise from Mr. Dunn.

Mr. J. Shires Will, member for the Montrose Burghs, is not so advanced as the member for Paisley, though he seems to have taken some steps on the right road. Being asked at a recent public meeting if he would vote for the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws, he replied that "he thought a great deal might be done in lessening the severity of these laws, but it would not do to allow people to openly insult the religion of their neighbors." Mr. Shires Will is in the half-and-half stage. Perhaps he would vote for legalising bequests to Secular Societies.

Mr. J. G. Fisher addressed a fine meeting on Sunday afternoon on Woodhouse Moor, Leeds. He replied to the misrepresentations of a local journal with regard to Mrs. Besant and the Secular party. There was some opposition, which Mr. Fisher ably answered.

Mr. W. Heaford has sent us an account of his Northern lecture-tour. It will appear in our next issue.

Mr. J. K. Mitchell has been spending a fortnight's holiday at Yarmouth. He took with him a good stock of Freethought literature, which he judiciously distributed. He found the *Freethinker* much in request. People who saw him reading it would beg it of him. On board the steamer the passengers and sailors snapped it up with avidity. Mr. Mitchell begs us to state that the *Freethinker* is sold at Great Yarmouth by J. Headley, Row 56, Market-place.

Last Sunday the Bradford Branch had a picnic to Morecambe Bay. The party numbered about forty. Two addresses were delivered by Mr. A. B. Wakefield and Mr. J. Grange. There were large audiences and some frivolous opposition.

An adjourned meeting of Secularists in the neighborhood of Victoria Park will be held on Tuesday, Sept. 15, at Swaby's Coffee House, Mile-end-road, near the Paragon Music-hall. The object is to form a Branch of the N. S. S.

Mr. Sam Standing's lecture on "The Presbyterian God" seems to have badly hit the Presbyterian minister whose boastful tones have so long been heard at the Midland Archers. Messrs. Standing and Rowney are going to enlarge upon the Confession of Faith next Sunday (Sept. 20) at 3. The Presbyterian minister's lambs are expected to be present.

Mr. Stanley Jones has been giving successful lectures at Halstead. They were briefly reported in the *Essex and Suffolk News*, which laments, "Unfortunately the Society is spreading."

A member of the N. S. S. at Newark has been criticising the Pleasant Sunday Afternoon people there, and upholding Freethought in a controversy going on in the *Newark Herald*.

It is already evident that a very large proportion of schools will take advantage of the Education Act of last session, and take the grant out of taxes instead of fees from the parents, and it is probable that more will eventually decide to do so when they see the success of the free schools. The schools becoming more and more public institutions, it remains to see that they are conducted in the interest of the public, and not in that of clerical managers.

Some very large posters are being printed for the N. S. S. lectures at the Hall of Science. They will be freely posted in London. While we are writing we may again call

attention to the course tickets—one guinea, single; and a guinea and a half, double—which are on sale at the Hall, and at 28 Stonecutter-street. They admit to the shilling reserved seats for twelve months.

MR. BEN TILLET ON CHRISTIANITY.

MR. BEN TILLET, who made a considerable name for himself during the dockers' strike, has been preaching recently in the Victoria Park Congregational Church. This is no new experience on Mr. Tillet's part, as he has long been addicted to pulpit thumping, I believe. But it is only since he made a reputation in connection with strikes that his utterances in the pulpit have received any attention, and one would have looked in vain for a report of a sermon of his, even of a "summary" description, before the dock laborers' dispute. That his religious opinions carry any more weight now than at that time can hardly be contended, as there does not seem to be much connection between strikes and Christianity, unless it be the fact that the carpenter's son always seemed to be on strike, as he never appears to have done any work, though according to one of the apocryphal gospels, he assisted his father (Joseph), who was but an indifferent workman, occasionally, in a novel and original way, by *stretching* the furniture, etc., that the old man made too short. His followers have gone on *stretching* in another sense ever since. However, Christians are glad to have a real labor leader, however insignificant, on their side; hence a summary of Mr. Tillet's sermon.

Mr. Tillet, according to the report, "believes every word he utters, though he may not always carry conviction with his arguments." This does not strike me as being particularly complimentary to Mr. Tillet, as, if he didn't believe what he said, he would be a hypocrite. But perhaps, from a Christian standpoint, it is a high compliment. Mr. Tillet may be an exception to the generality of preachers.

The docker's friend, as he is termed in the report, has learnt that "Jesus Christ is a friend of democracy," and consequently "placed himself at issue with Atheism and Materialism." Where Mr. Tillet learnt that Jesus Christ was a friend of the democracy the report does not say. In the gospels? Not much! What measures of political or social reform did Jesus advocate for the amelioration of the masses? Did he advocate the franchise, or temperance, or co-operation, or education? Did he utter one word against slavery—living in the midst of it? Did he use his divine knowledge to convey to us any new fact in science that would have benefited the race? Did he tell us anything about the mariner's compass, or the safety lamps for miners? He could, according to the gospels, talk by the hour of virtues in the abstract; but would that have won the "docker's tanner"? The fact is, Christ's mission was salvation from the wrath to come. The world was shortly coming to an end, and it would be absurd to expect him to take part in practical worldly measures.

But let us admit, for the sake of argument, that Jesus Christ was the friend of the democracy. How does that affect us to-day? Is Christ the only friend the democracy ever had? In what respect does the existence of a young Jew nearly two thousand years ago affect our present-day political and social requirements? He was not to be seen in London during the dock strike, was he? Perhaps, had he been, he would not have given the best advice. He might have said, "Resist not evil," or "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's"; or "Blessed are the poor in spirit"; or "If any man take away thy coat let him have thy cloak also."

As a matter of fact, there never was a man who acquired such a great reputation by doing so little as Christ. Mr. Tillet described Mrs. Besant as his friend, but declared her theological creed as a "mud-heap, thinly covered with the gold of the Gospel, so thinly covered that it was not difficult to see through it." As Mrs. Besant is neither an Atheist nor a Materialist, we can pass on wishing her joy of her friend.

The Gospel Mr. Tillet declared to be "broad," which means, I suppose, that the road to hell is broad and the Gospel sends the vast majority of people there. It also "defies the law of heredity." Wonderful Gospel, and wonderful preacher of a wonderful Gospel! If Mr. Tillet's Gospel defies heredity, Mr. Tillet defies common sense. "Attempts are being made," said the oracle of the dock strike, "to construct new gospels, but they are of Brummagem make—quackery; they are a crutch that will let you down. We want no quackery; we want love, which is the antithesis

of Materialism." Quite right, Ben, quite right; we want no quackery, but some of us *do* want common sense badly. "I pity," said the preacher with fine scorn, "the all-knowing sceptic and Materialist, from whom these things are hid." I pity him myself too, Ben; the "all-knowing" sceptic should know better than have anything hid from him.

"Christ will readjust society," said the preacher, "pulling down the oppressor and uplifting the oppressed." When this consummation so devoutly to be wished for arrives, Mr. Tillet does not inform us, but taking into consideration the fact that Christ has been "on the job" eighteen hundred years and still has his work cut out for him, I think it is about time we looked elsewhere for a "readjuster." "Some of my friends," said Mr. Tillet, "dislike my occupying the pulpit, but these days, one has to dare to be a Daniel and defend the teaching of the pulpit and maintain the equality of all men."

Evidently Mr. Tillet's friends have his interests at heart, and recognise the fact that preaching is not his "fort," as Artemus Ward would say.

H. J.

LONDON SECULAR FEDERATION.

COUNCIL MEETING, held at Hall of Science on Thursday, Sept. 6. Present: Messrs. Forder, Moss, G. Standing (vice-presidents), R. O. Smith (treasurer), Baker, Brown, Collins, Courtney, Enderby, Hooper, Lupton, Moore, Renn, Rowden, Rowney, Rutland, Rutt, Sutcliffe, S. Standing, Thomas Turner, Miss Vance, and Williams. In the temporary absence of the President, the chair was occupied by Mr. R. O. Smith. The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed. The secretary reported the affiliation of the North Finchley Branch, and presented a financial statement of the excursion, which was accepted as read. The matter of free lectures was considered, and the secretary was instructed to endeavor to arrange for a course in North London, after the Hall of Science series in October. The question of Secular education was discussed, and Mr. Moss suggested some questions to School Board candidates, and promised to draw up a suitable list by next meeting. At this point Mr. Foote took the chair; and after the North Middlesex Secular Federation affiliation had been disposed of, Mr. Moss brought forward his scheme for the centralisation of the lecture system. Following an introductory speech, in which a detailed plan was set forth, he moved—"That this Federation be empowered to appoint paid lecturers, whose duty it shall be to lecture for the Branches on Sundays; and that in future the open-air lecture work be, as far as possible, organised and arranged by the Federation." In order that the matter might be discussed, Mr. R. O. Smith formally seconded. Messrs. Forder, Renn, Standing, and Miss Vance took part in the debate thereon, and eventually a committee (Messrs. Enderby, Lupton, Renn, Rutland, and Miss Vance) was appointed to consider the matter and report at next meeting. Mr. Forder announced that he had received an invitation, and would probably contest the Finsbury Division at the next School Board election. The president of the West Ham Branch was also reported as a likely candidate for the West Ham School Board. A vote was taken for the printing of the October Lecture List, and the Council adjourned till October 1, at 7 p.m.—EDMUND POWNCEBY, Sec.

OBITUARY.

Henry Sanderson, a member of the South Shields Branch, died at Jarrow on August 30, and was buried at the local cemetery on September 2, Mr. S. M. Peacock reading the Secular Burial Service, while thirty N. S. S. members, with other mourners, stood round the grave. He bore a long and excruciating illness with very great fortitude, and his Free-thought convictions sustained him to the end. His devoted wife nursed him most tenderly, but his own desire was to die. I called to see him with a common friend, Mr. Hubert Richardson, ten days before he expired. I found him wasted to a skeleton, but his brain was clear and sane, and he smiled as he spoke of a certain Christian who had been anxious for his salvation. Henry Sanderson was one of Nature's gentlemen—thoughtful, well-informed, self-reliant, fearless and sympathetic. It was impossible to conceive of his telling a falsehood or stooping to any baseness. I claim a personal share in the grief of his wife and children and of his brother John, who belongs to the same order of mind and character. My dead friend was universally esteemed. Those who knew him are aware that the world is poorer for the loss of a wise and brave spirit. A king of men, though he lived humbly, has gone to his rest.—G. W. FOOTE.

THE MAHATMA LETTERS EXPLAINED.

A SHOAL of letters have appeared in the *Daily Chronicle* on the subject of the occult messages said to have been received by Mrs. Besant from the Mahatmas. Some pertinently ask what good the Mahatmas have suggested, others roundly refuse to believe Mrs. Besant any more than Mdme. Blavatsky, while some accept the marvels, and even refer to Christ as the great Mahatma. The most notable explanation we have yet seen is that of "Sat Bhai," whose view may commend itself as avoiding the extremes of imposture or miracle. "Sat Bhai" holds in brief that Mdme. Blavatsky was a Russian spy. Theosophy was the cover of political designs. It was the conclusion of Mr. R. Hodgson, who was sent to India by the Society for P-ychical Research to investigate the alleged Mahatma marvels, not only that they were fraudulent, but that Mdme. Blavatsky's real object was "to foster and foment as widely as possible among the natives a dissatisfaction towards British rule." A striking passage from Mdme. Blavatsky's writing is given in confirmation. She went to America to be naturalised for protection as an American citizen, and during the Afghan troubles took over Colonel Olcott of the U. S. Secret Service. Under cover of Theosophical lodges, with secret signs and pass words, and with the exoteric doctrine of the brotherhood of man, and the esoteric teaching of the approaching end of a cycle, when the powers that be would be overturned, they worked for this ulterior end.

"Sat Bhai" says: "Theosophy flourished in India until Madame Coulomb exposed how its miracles at the Mahatma shrine were wrought by means of sliding panels, and how Mahatmas were manufactured out of cushions, a doll, and a white sheet. Then India became too hot. Madame Blavatsky returned to Europe. Here she had slight success, except with that good Russophile Mr. W. T. Stead and the *Pall Mall Gazette*, through which eventually the lady was reached whose recent utterances have excited such curiosity. As a friend of Prince Kropotkin, Stepniak, and the Russian Nihilists, as well as for her eloquence and enthusiasm, Mrs. Besant would be invaluable. No pains were spared to secure her. She was at once offered the co-editorship with Madame Blavatsky of *Lucifer*, that position having been vacated by Miss Mabel Collins under the conviction that her colleague was a charlatan. Money was forthcoming to convert Mrs. Besant's own residence into the Theosophical headquarters. But the game did not entirely succeed. The Nihilists got occult warning that 19 Avenue-road was now dangerous ground. Though Madame Blavatsky here lived the life of a Bhikshuni, or Buddhist nun, keeping very secluded from the other inmates, the proximity was dangerous. Mrs. Besant was sent to America as the personal representative of Madame Blavatsky; and I doubt not, it having been discovered that she was sympathetic with the natives of India under British rule, it was decided to send her, and perhaps her friend, Mr. H. Burrows, to India to perfect their chelaship by preaching the brotherhood of man, the approaching end of a cycle, etc., to the natives. During Mrs. Besant's absence in America Madame Blavatsky was unexpectedly carried off by Russian influenza. But the far-reaching schemes of such a lady do not perish with her. She was, as she always averred, the messenger of masters more potent than herself, and while her dupes are willing they will continue to be utilised in the service of the Masters. Occult messages will come on strange paper and with strange seals, but with the injunction to secrecy, and the real purport of all will be the overthrow of British rule in India. Mrs. Besant is neither an impostor nor a messenger of Mahatmas, but a dupe of Russian and Indian intrigue. I know this theory will excite the violent repudiation of all Theosophists unacquainted with the Senezar language. In answer to such repudiation I simply say let the letters be produced and printed, let the public judge whether they confirm or confute my theory."

Mrs. Besant has innocently replied that "not a word as to the Russian or Indian political designs has reached my ears."

No one can overestimate the evils that have been endured by the human race by reason of a departure from the standard of the natural. The world has been governed by jugglery, by sleight-of-hand. Miracles, wonders, tricks, have been regarded of far greater importance than the steady, sublime and unbroken march of cause and effect. The improbable has been established by the impossible. Falsehood has furnished the foundation for faith.—*Ingersoll*.

MODERN WITCHCRAFT.

Time: Mid-day.

Scene: A Garden at the Rear of the Theosophical Headquarters, St. John's Wood.

Present: Several leading Theosophists, male and female.

First Leading Theosophist: Oh, oh! Ah, ah! I feel it; it's coming, it's coming!

All the Theosophists look up, open-mouthed, and from the direction of Bow-road, East, a bundle of letters approaches rapidly through the air and falls into the garden. A simultaneous rush is made for the bundle.

Second Leading Theosophist: Brethren, here's a communication from the Bogieman of the Catchwhocatchcan Mountains! He is one of the most celebrated of the Mahatmas. He encloses a postal order for 2s. 11 $\frac{3}{4}$ l., payable at the Fleet-street Post Office, towards the expense of erecting a shrine in memory of our good mother, Saint Blavatsky.

Third Leading Theosophist: And here's a communication from Hoodmanblind, who lives on locusts and wild honey in a balloon anchored to the cone of the Himalayas. He sends a recipe for the manufacture of astral bells and has no doubt they will soon supersede the electric bells. In a postscript he asks for a bundle of warm, old clothes to be made up and despatched to him by atmospheric post, as it is terribly cold up there, and the winter's coming on.

Fourth Leading Theosophist: Here's a communication from Diddlemuddle, of Skinnedfool's Range. He sends his photograph, and says he wants a pupil—a virgin female, young, and good-looking.

The further reading of the correspondence was interrupted for some time while the lady Theosophists examined the portrait of the Mahatma. He seemed to be a young and rather good-looking Indian. He rode on an ass and winked the right eye. One further letter was read enclosing a subscription in case there should be a police prosecution for practising tricks and witchcraft. Then the whole party fell into a trance, from which they had not awakened at the time of inditing these lines.—"*Docdo*" in "*Reynolds's Newspaper*."

IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

In the kingdom of God his chosen ones dwell,
And they are a sweet-scented crew,
Old Adam and Enoch and Noah and Ham,
If the Bible is true.

In the kingdom of God you can mingle with Lot,
And meet his two daughters there too,
And hear the sweet stories that they can relate,
If the Bible is true.

And Judah is there in that kingdom of bliss,
His daughter-in-law's present too,
To tell to the ransomed her strange escapades,
If the Bible is true.

High up in the councils Miss Rahab is seen,
A harlot from Jericho who
Betrayed to their foes her neighbors and friends,
If the Bible is true.

In that beautiful realm a hero abides,
Old Samson, who followed and slew
The Philistine hosts with the jaw of an ass,
If the Bible is true.

And Jonah, the prophet of God, liveth there,
Who told of a gourd-vine that grew,
Who lodged in a whale for three days and three nights,
If the Bible is true.

King David is there, and Uriah also,
And Bath-Sheba's stopping there too,
All living in peace in the kingdom of God,
If the Bible is true.

And the wisest of men, King Solomon's there,
With his wives and his concubines, who
Inspired his gay songs which our children must read,
If the Bible is true.

Ye saints of the Lord, ye ransomed of God,
Ye Christians, ye orthodox few,
Imagine a life in this kingdom of God,
If the Bible is true!

W. H. STITES.

Let us propagate morality unfettered by superstition.—
Thomas Paine.

SUNDAY MEETINGS.

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

LONDON.

Ball's Pond Secular Hall, 36 Newington Green Road: 7, Mrs. Thornton Smith, "The Atonement."
 Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station): Sunday and Monday, at 8, social gatherings. Wednesday, at 7.30, dramatic class. Thursday, at 8 discussion.
 Camberwell—61 New Church Road, S.E.: 7.30, Mr. B. Hyatt, "Can a Man by Searching Find Out God?" Preceded by a dramatic study from *Macbeth*.
 East London—Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile End Road: 8, Mr. R. Forder, "Bible and Ancient Monuments."
 Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C.: 7, Mr. G. W. Foote, "What Does Mrs. Besant Mean?"
 Lambeth—114 Kennington Road: 12, members' meeting.
 Milton Hall, Hawley Crescent, Kentish Town Road, N.W.: 7.30, ballad concert.
 West Ham—Secular Hall, 121 Broadway, Plaistow: 7.30, Mr. C. Ivatts, "Matter and Mind." Thursday, at 8, open debate. Saturday, at 8, concert (free).
 West London—Clarendon Coffee Palace, Clarendon Road (close to Latimer Road Station): Friday, at 8.30, adjourned members' business meeting.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park Gates: Mr. A. Johnson, 11.15, "Ancient Paganism"; 6.30, "Creed and Conduct."
 Bethnal Green (opposite St. John's Church): 11.15, Mr. A. B. Moss, "Lost, a Personal Devil."
 Camberwell—Station Road: 11.30, Mr. B. Hyatt, "The Ascension Myth."
 Clerkenwell Green: 11.30, Mr. F. Haslam will lecture.
 Edmonton (corner of Angel Road): 7, Mr. C. Cohen will lecture.
 Finsbury Park (near the band-stand): 11.30, Mr. R. Rosetti, "The Origin of Man"; 3.30, Mr. C. Cohen, "The Value of Christianity."
 Hammersmith Bridge (Middlesex side): 6.30, Mr. W. Norrish, "The Childhood of Christianity."
 Hyde Park (near Marble Arch): 11.30, Mr. Lucretius Keen, "God and his Son."
 Kilburn—Salisbury Road (close to Queen's Park Station): 6.30, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "What Think ye of Christ?"
 Kingsland Green: 11.30, Mr. C. J. Steinberg, "Miracles."
 Lambeth (corner of Belvedere Road, opposite St. Thomas's Hospital), Westminster Bridge: 6, Mr. W. Heaford, "Heaven and Hell: what must it be to be there?"
 Leyton (open space near Vicarage Road, High Road): 11.30, Mr. C. Johnson, "Is the Bible the Secret of England's Greatness?"
 Midland Arches (corner of Battle Bridge Road): 11.30, Mr. J. Fagan, "Is there any Efficacy in Prayer?"
 Mile End Waste: 11.30, Mr. W. Heaford, "What is Secularism?"
 North Finchley—Coleridge Road: 3.30, Mr. W. J. Ramsey, "Christ's Moral Fables."
 Old Pimlico Pier: 11.30, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "Butler's Analogy."
 Plaistow Green (near the Station): 11.30, Mr. E. Calvert, "The Soul."
 Regent's Park (near Gloucester Gate): 3.30, Mr. R. Forder, "Bible and Ancient Monuments."
 Stratford—Matthew's Park Estate, Ham Park Road: 3.30, Mr. E. Calvert, "Miracles and Prophecy as Tests of Truth."
 Tottenham (corner of West Green Road): 3.30, Mr. Sam Standing, "Naaman the Leper."
 Victoria Park (near the fountain): 11.30, Mr. G. W. Foote, "Heaven and Hell"; 3.15, Mr. A. B. Moss, "The Last of the Gods."
 Wood Green—Jolly Butcher's Hill: 11.30, Mr. E. W. Osborn, "The God Idea."

COUNTRY.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, Cambridge Street: 11, members' social meeting; 7, Mr. R. S. Bransby, "The Priestley Riots."
 Bedlington—Co-operative Hall, Bedlington Station: Tuesday, at 7, Mr. Charles Watts, "The Difficulties of Theism."
 Blackburn—Assembly Rooms, Town Hall Street: Thursday, Sept. 10, at 7.30, Mr. Stanley Jones, "Jesus and his Parents." Admission free.
 Crook—Albert Hall, Wellington: Friday, Sept. 11, at 7.30, Mr. Charles Watts, "What Think ye of Christ?"
 Glasgow—Ex-Mission Hall, 110 Brunswick Street: noon, debating class, Chairman's opening address; 6.30, Mr. J. P. Gilmore, "Some Recent Local Instances of Clerical Cowardice."
 Heckmondwike—At Mr. John Rothera's, Bottoms: 2.30, a business meeting.
 Hetton-le-Hole—Committee Room, Miner's Hall: 6, members' meeting.
 Liverpool—Camden Hall, Camden Street: 7, Mr. C. J. Day (a pupil of Richard Carlile), "Why am I Not a Christian?"
 Manchester N. S. S., Secular Hall, Rusholme Road, Oxford Road, All Saints': Mr. Stanley Jones, 11, "The Basis of Secularism"; 6.30, "Christian Opposition to Science."
 Middlesbrough—Cleveland Hall, Newport Road: Thursday, at 7, Mr. Charles Watts, "Atheism and the French Revolution."
 Nelson—Albert Hall (close to railway Station): Monday, at 7.30, Mr. Stanley Jones, "Christian opposition to Science." Tuesday, at 7.30, "Jesus and his Parents."
 Newcastle-on-Tyne—Eldon Hall (corner of Clayton Street and Blakett Street): 3, fortnightly meeting of members; 7, Mr. G. Balkirk, "Evolution."
 Ox Hill—Co-operative Hall, Annfield Plain: Saturday, Sept. 12, at 7, Mr. Charles Watts, "The Christian Superstition: its Origin and Influence."

Portsmouth—Wellington Hall, Wellington Street, Southsea: 7, Mr. Scarrott, "The Code of Nature."
 Rochdale—Secular Hall, Milkstone Road: 6.30, Mr. John Grange, "An Analysis of Scientific Theism."
 Sheffield Branch N. S. S., Excursion to Grimsby and Cleethorpes; members and friends meet near Victoria Station at 8.30; trains leave at 8.45.
 South Shields—Free Library Hall, Ocean Road: Mr. Charles Watts, 11, "Freethought in England and America"; 3, "Atheism and the French Revolution"; 7, "Religion without Theology."
 Spennymoor—Victoria Hall, Dundas Street: 10.30, important business meeting. On Wednesday, in Spennymoor Town Hall, at 7.30, Mr. Charles Watts, "The Christian Superstition: its Origin and Influence."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Hetton-le-Hole—Tront Street (near Henry Lawson's): 3, Mr. Dipper, "The Birth, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus Unsubstantiated."
 Houghton-le-Springs—"Big Inn": 11, Mr. Dipper, "The Bible Not Inspired."
 Manchester (corner of Denmark Road): 3, Mr. Stanley Jones, "Jesus and his Parents."
 Newcastle-on-Tyne—Quayside (near big crane): 11, Mr. A. Dawson, "Why we Reject 'our Savior.'"
 Rochdale—Town Hall Square: 3, Mr. John Grange, "Darwin and Moses; or the Crumbling of Creeds."

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

TOUZEAU PARRIS, 28 Rivercourt Road, Hammersmith, London, W.—Sept. 27, Milton Hall. Nov. 22, Hall of Science.

STANLEY JONES, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.—Sept. 13, Manchester; 14, Nelson; 15, Nelson; 19, Chester; 20, Liverpool; 27, Rushden. Oct. 4, Battersea; 18, Finsbury Park. Nov. 1, West Ham.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Creden Road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—Sept. 13, morning, Clerkenwell Green; afternoon, Victoria Park; 20, morning, Westminster. Oct. 4, Camberwell; 11, Westminster; 18, morning, Hall of Science; 25, Camberwell. Nov. 15, Reading.

C. J. HUNT, 48 Fordingley Road, St. Peter's Park, London, W.—Sept. 13, morning, Pimlico; evening, Kilburn; 20, morning, Clerkenwell Green; afternoon, Finsbury Park; 27, morning, Hyde Park; evening, Hammersmith. Oct. 4, morning, Pimlico; 11, morning, Camberwell; 18, morning, Mile End; 25, Manchester.

TOLEMAN-GARNER, 8 Heyworth Road, Stratford, London, E.—Sept. 20, morning, Leyton; 27, morning, Clerkenwell Green. Oct. 11, evening, Ball's Pond. Nov. 29, Ball's Pond.

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