



"TRUTH BEARS THE TORCH IN THE SEARCH FOR TRUTH."—*Lucretius.*

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Age of Reason.

PROPHETIC voices now resound;
Far, far and wide they strike the ear;
And o'er this favor'd clime they sound—
Proclaim the age of reason near!
Her glorious light doth now appear,
And superstition, frightened, flies,
For truth her mighty weapon plies,
And truth will triumph, nothing fear.
Then let us join in praise
To truth and virtue's name,
To love and wisdom's purest rays,
In nature's wide domain.
—[Selected.]

CHRISTIANITY AND MATERIALISM COMPARED.

BY B. F. UNDERWOOD.

Christianity Teaches:

THE existence of a God infinite in presence, yet a personal being; infinite in knowledge, yet a being who cogitates, contrives, plans and designs, like man; infinite in power, yet the author of a world full of imperfections; infinite in goodness (as well as power), yet permits martyrs to expire amid flames, and patriots and philanthropists to languish in dungeons; unchangeable, yet at a certain time after a beginningless state of inaction, aroused from his idleness and made a universe out of nothing; is not the cause of evil, yet the creator of everything and everybody save himself; is free from infirmities, yet is pleased with some things and displeased with others; is without body, parts or passions, and yet is of the masculine sex.

2. The original perfection of everything.
3. The existence of a devil—a creature made by God, and the author of evil that will exist forever.
4. That man is a "fallen creature" and unable to improve by his own unassisted efforts.
5. That man can be "saved" only through the blood and merits of Christ.
6. That belief in the Christian system involves moral merit; disbelief, sin.
7. That it is man's duty to worship God by prayer and praise.
8. That a comparatively small portion of mankind in the future will be happy; the greater portion will be in torment eternally.
9. That man has received a book revelation, of which, however, but a comparatively small part of the race has ever obtained information.
10. That reason should be subordinated to the teachings of the Bible.
11. That woman is man's inferior and subordinate, was made for his gratification and convenience, while man was made for himself and the glory of God.
12. That God has approved and sanctioned polygamy, slavery and despotism.
13. That man should take no thought for the morrow. He should pattern after the lilies of the field.
14. That Jesus was God Almighty incased in human flesh.
15. That the golden age of the earth was in the past.

Materialism Teaches:

THE self-existence, the eternity and the sufficiency of nature, and the universality and invariableness of natural law.

2. That in the history of this world there has been an evolution from the simple to the complex, from the special to the general, from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous.
3. That good and evil are relative terms. All morality is founded on utility and evolved by the wants and necessities of human existence. Honesty is right, not because a God has so declared, but because man's security, safety and happiness are promoted by it.
4. That man's condition, although imperfect, is improvable by his own unaided efforts.
5. That man should look to himself and not to a spectacle of suffering and death of eighteen hundred years ago for improvement and elevation.
6. That belief and unbelief are involuntary and without moral merit or demerit.
7. That instead of worshiping God we should direct all our efforts to improve ourselves, letting "gods attend on things for gods to know."
8. That man, wherever he may exist, it is rational to believe, will be fitted to his condition. An unbroken, everlasting sleep, which probably awaits us all, affords no ground for fear. And how infinitely preferable to a future state of punishment in which the majority of our race will be forever miserable!
9. That the teachings of reason and the lessons of experience are the only revelations man has received.
10. That the Bible should be tested by the same rules of historical and modern criticism that are applied to other ancient documents.
11. That woman is man's equal and natural companion—exists for him only in the sense in which he exists for her.
12. That slavery, polygamy and despotism are evils whenever and wherever they exist.
13. That man should attend to the affairs of this world, and, contrary to the notion of Jesus, should take "thought for the morrow."
14. Jesus was probably a reformer, a "come-outer," an "Infidel" of his time. We can esteem him as a benefactor without worshiping him as a God.
15. The present is better than the past, and the golden age of the world is in the future.

"Ignorabimus?"

Can Anybody Know Anything?

BY PROF. ERNST HAECKEL, REV. J. P. BLAND, MARIE HARROLD GARRISON, T. B. WAKEMAN.

Psychics Rest Upon Physics.

BY PROF. ERNST HAECKEL.

IT is only in these most highly-developed groups of the animal kingdom that we can with certainty establish the existence of the most perfect operations of the central nervous system, which we designate as consciousness. As we know, it is precisely this highest brain-function that still continues to be looked upon as a completely enigmatical phenomenon, and as the best proof for the immaterial existence of an immortal soul. It is usual at the same time to appeal to Du Bois-Reymond's well-known "Ignorabimus" address "on the Boundaries of Natural Knowledge" (1872). It was by a peculiar irony of fate that the famous lecturer of the Berlin Academy of Science, in this much-discussed address of twenty years ago, should be representing consciousness as an incomprehensible marvel, and as presenting an insuperable barrier to further advances of knowledge, at the very moment that David Friedrich Strauss, the greatest Freethought theologian of our century, was showing to be the opposite. That clear-sighted author of "The Old Faith and the New" had already clearly perceived that the soul-activities of man, and therefore also his consciousness, as functions of the central nervous system, all spring from a common source, and, from a monistic point of view, come under the same category. The "exact" Berlin physiologist shut this knowledge out from his mind, and, with a short-sightedness almost inconceivable, placed this special neurological question alongside of the one great "world-riddle," the fundamental question of substance, the general question of the

connection between matter and energy.

Consciousness, like feeling and willing, among the higher animals is a [plasmic] mechanical work of the ganglion-cells, and as such must be carried back to chemical and physical events in the plasma of these. And by the employment of the genetic and comparative method we reach the conviction that consciousness, and consequently reason also, is a brain-function and not exclusively peculiar to man; it occurs also in many of the higher animals, not in Vertebrates only, but even in Articulates. Only in degree, through a higher stage of cultivation, does the consciousness of man differ from that of the more perfect lower animals, and the same is true of all other activities of the human soul.

By these and other results of comparative physiology our whole psychology is placed on a new and firm monistic basis. The older mystical conception of the soul, as we find it not only amongst primitive peoples, but also in the systems of the dualistic philosophers of today, is refuted by them.

The antiquated view of Du Bois-Reymond (1872)—that human consciousness is an insoluble "world-riddle," a transcendent phenomenon in essential antithesis to all other natural phenomena—continues to be upheld in numerous writings. It is chiefly on this that the dualistic view of the world founds its assertion, that man is an altogether peculiar being, and that his personal soul is immortal; and this is the reason why the "Leipsic ignorabimus speech" of Du Bois-Reymond has for twenty years been prized as a defence by all representatives of the mythological view of the world, and extolled as a refutation of "monistic dogma." The closing word of the discourse, "ignorabimus," was translated as in the present tense, and this "ignoramus" taken to mean "we know nothing at all;" or, even worse, that "we can never come to clearness about anything, and any further talk about the matter is idle." The famous "Ignorabimus" address remains certainly an important rhetorical work of art; it is a "beautiful sermon," characterised by its highly-finished form and its surprising variety of philosophico-scientific pictures. It is well known, however, that the majority (and especially women) judge a "beautiful sermon" not according to the value of the thoughts embodied in

NOTE.—In the Boston Investigator (from June 9 to July 23, inclusive), Rev. J. P. Bland published a very learned, able "serial" called "The Gospel of Evolution," which we join with others in asking him to reprint in permanent form. Prof. Wakeman, fearing confusion as to "God and Immortality," ventured certain questions to the author (Investigator, July 21). His reply and other matter called out by it occasions the present articles.