

Correspondence.

VICTORIA, VANCOUVER ISLAND, B. C.

Dear Christian: I arrived in Halifax December 21st, and left again on the 24th, arriving here January 1st, 1891. I remained over at Montreal one night and a day. I took in some of the city. It is a very city, and contains some very fine buildings. There was good sleighing and very cold weather. The whole drive to Winnipeg was one of fine scenery. Winnipeg is growing, and seemed full of business life. There are some fine buildings, but I had no time to visit them. From Winnipeg to the Rockies is one level stretch of country. Some portions of the land is very good and other parts rather poor. We saw a great many ranches, and the winter being fine all cattle were out grazing.

Coming to the Rocky Mountains you take in the most beautiful scenery imaginable. No pen can hardly describe it. Passing around the mountains you look out the car window but in vain to see the tops of the mountains far above you. Many of those mountains are snow-capped, and when the sun shines upon them it is a beautiful sight. The river valley beneath you has a dangerous look. There is much trestle work, bridges, and many tunnels to pass through. There are many good hotels along the line, and gotten up in the very best style. The journey is one of pleasure to him who never was over the road before.

Now, coming to Vancouver, on the main land, I cannot say much, as we went immediately on board the boat, the train being late getting in, but I am told it is growing rapidly. No doubt, in the near future it will be the city of the Pacific coast. Being the terminus of the Canadian Pacific Railroad, it must become a large city in time.

Now a few words about Victoria, B. C. This city is nicely laid out, and has some very fine buildings. The people here seem to be doing well, and many are wealthy. Labor is high—men on the streets get \$2.50 per day; carpenters \$4 per day; and other tradesmen in higher branches of business get from \$5 upward.

As regards religious matters the people are not as thoughtful about the one thing needful as in the East. The Lord's day is not observed here any better than in Chicago. Saloons all run in full blast. Chinese work all day. I find here a church of England, a Presbyterian church, Methodist church, a Baptist church, and the Salvation Army. I saw a *Christian Union Mission Hall*. But it is closed and to let. It is near the wharves. I have not found out as yet any *Disciples of Christ*. It is very hard to be deprived of Christian communion. Yet we must be content to do what God would have us do. We know not what the Lord has in store for each one of us. I am far away from you, but my hope is that I may be able to do better here, and have more means to help on the cause in Halifax.

I have seen some hard sights since my arrival. I saw one man who died away from home, and was buried by his seal hunting friends. Then there was a caving in of a wharf. A steamer brought a cargo of lobsters and piled too many on one end of the shed. It gave way and seven men were carried into eternity without a moment's warning. It was a most heart-rending sight. This should cause us to be prepared day by day; for, in an hour when we think not, the Son of Man may come to each of us.

I will write again in the near future. Wishing you all the compliments of the season, and prosperity to the CHRISTIAN. I remain yours as ever,
January 19, 1891. W. J. MESSERVEY.

Miscellaneous.

JEWISH DEFENCE OF CHRISTIANITY.

[From the Brooklyn "Eagle," of December 23, in reply to a letter from a Jewish Rabbi arguing that Christ was a myth or else an impostor.]

To the Editor of the Brooklyn Eagle:

Some few weeks since there appeared in the "Eagle" a letter from our much esteemed friend and coreligionist, Rabbi Sparger. It was brought to the notice of our association by one of our members, and it received a great deal of consideration, as did also the answers to it which appeared in the "Eagle" subsequently. All the letters, except Rabbi Sparger's, were, apparently, from Christians. Now, if the "Eagle" will give us a little of its valuable space we will give the views of a considerable number of liberal minded Jews (not orthodox), not Jews who look backward, but men who look at things as they appear at the present time. The first question we considered was, Could a fraud or delusion have stood the trials and tests which Christianity has stood and have held its ground, in every instance, and gone forward with giant strides, till it is now the most liberal and progressive religion that the world has ever seen, a religion adapted to every country and every people on this globe? Other religions are and have been always sectional, each having its own special district or country (Judaism alone excepted), and although we Jews do not believe the Christians are right, we must, nevertheless, wonder at the rapid progress and the gigantic proportions to which the Christian religion has grown. What would this world have been if the Christian religion had not come into it? Judaism would not certainly have developed into such a grand and sweeping system. We Jews were but a handful of the world's population, and we were always a secluded people, keeping to ourselves and looking at all other nations as inferior, not trying to raise others above paganism, but shunning them and despising them. Christianity, on the other hand, is seeking out every nation and people, and we Jews to-day enjoy the greatest benefits in countries where the people live the nearest up to the teachings of their leader, Jesus Christ. Be he a myth or a reality, his teachings, without doubt, improve all who follow them. Then the Christian religion to-day shows no sign of weakness, but is stronger than ever, and is gaining in strength, while all the other religions are on the decline, receding before the rapid advance of Christianity. Judaism alone remains immovable, we might say a fossilized monument of God's truth, a religion with a glorious past record, but with little hope for the future. We Jews plod along the well beaten tracks of our forefathers and make no advance. What did all the elaborate ceremonial law given to our forefathers mean? Was it simply a meaningless ceremony to be performed year after year? We think not. It must have certainly pointed to something to come. Then all through the prophets' time, what do the prophets mean? We modern Jews are apt to explain the prophets' meaning to suit ourselves and place great reliance on what our rabbis say. But our forefathers did not think so. They either disbelieved the prophets or looked for the fulfillment of the prophets' predictions at some future time, but we Jews of the present day do not look for the fulfillment of anything. Since the time of Christ there has not arisen among us one prophet to oppose Christ as an impostor, which is now over eighteen hundred years. This we cannot but believe to be circumstantial evidence that the law was fulfilled in Christ. Then one of our best authorities, the Targum, applies part of Isaiah fifty-second and all of the fifty-third chapter to the Messiah. So do our Pesekta and our ancient books, the Tanchuma and Siphre, all of which was fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Then, again, Josephus speaks of Christ. Although some con-

tend that the passage where he refers directly to Jesus, called the Christ, is spurious, yet we cannot prove that it is not genuine. Tacitus, a little over a century after Christ's birth, and who lived about the time of Josephus, quotes it as true. In another place Josephus speaks of James, the brother of Jesus who was called Christ. This passage has not been pronounced spurious; so it is safe to accept it as positive evidence that Christ did live on earth, and was a well-known person in his time. In the year A. D. 64 the Emperor Nero accused the Christians of firing Rome. This was less than forty years after the ascension, or rather the so-called ascension, of Christ, and quite a number of Christians were killed at the time. Very likely some of these Christians were Jews who had been converted to Christianity in Judea and had gone to Rome to escape persecution, which was raging against the Christians in Judea. Perhaps some of them had seen Christ and spoken with him. Perhaps some of them had seen some of the miracles reputed to have been done by him, and if there had been no Christ it is not likely that there would be people ready to die for their belief in a myth at so early a date. The burning of Rome is an undisputed fact, and there must have been quite a number of Christians or they would not have been noticed by the Roman pagans. It is a common thing for us to say that such a person as Jesus Christ did never exist, that he was a myth, only a fable made up by some Greek writer; but what proof can we bring to prove that he did not live on this earth?—while there is very good evidence to prove that he did live, and that he came just at the time when the Jewish nation was looking for the promised Messiah. Concerning the death and reputed resurrection of Christ we say nothing. If Christ was God, then his death amounted to nothing, and his resurrection amounted to nothing, as God could leave his earthly body and again assume it at pleasure. With the light of nearly two thousand years shining on us, simple assertion will not do: we must have proof. Now, we, as honest, free-thinking men, admit that we are in doubt, and if any one can prove that the Messiah is yet to come, we should very much like to hear from him.

MEYER RODEFELDT,
ISRAEL POSNER,
MARX LEVY,

Committee American Hebrew Freethinkers' Association.

Brooklyn, N. Y., December 21, 1890.

THE RELIGIOUS MULE.

Be not as the . . . mule. Psa. 32:9.

What depth of feeling and bitter experience this expresses! The mule is the incarnation of obstinacy. Standing with his fore-feet wide and firmly planted on the ground, his long ears laid back close to his neck, his tough hide, and long, awkward head, he is a picture of firmness. You doubtless imagine that David was thinking of one of those balky brutes on his father's farm when he wrote the text. Far more likely he was thinking of Joab—in comparison with whom the most obstinate of these early acquaintances was pliability itself.

There are mules and mules. All have the same character; but there is a diversity of outward forms. Some are horizontal, others are perpendicular. Some walk on four feet, and some on two. Usually, however, they do not walk at all, but stand very still.

Not a few of these animals are found browsing on the tender grass within the enclosure of the Christian church. They are easily discovered. In fact there is no need to discover them, for they soon make their presence felt. The mule, whatever may be his outward form, is an obstructionist. He is tenacious of his own opinions. He will have his own way, or he will stand still, and make everything