

described by the old name of Freethinker, if it can be used in an inoffensive sense. The result tends to show that perplexity is not confined to the Christian camp, and that, if we are forced to give up received beliefs, we are not likely at present to find certainty or repose elsewhere. Mr. Harrison pours scorn on Mr. Spencer's Religion of the Unknowable; Mr. Spencer pours scorn on Mr. Harrison's Religion of Humanity; Sir Fitz-james Stephen pours scorn on both. Mr. Herbert Spencer, who opened the discussion, evidently thought that he had mown down Christianity and all existing religious beliefs by one fell sweep of his philosophic scythe. Religion, he says, has its origin in dreams, which generate a belief in ghosts. Hence it is anthropomorphic, always seeking God after the image of man, and varying in its conceptions of the divine nature through the successive phases of human morality and thought. When the mental development of the race has reached a certain point, the theological process ends; man discovers that the God whom he has worshipped is only the creation of his own brain, discards his anthropomorphic conceptions, confesses his hopeless ignorance, and has thenceforth no religion but reverence for the Unknowable. The answer to this seems to be that it is only another instance of the traps into which physicists, however eminent, are in danger of falling when they advance sweeping theories about man without having studied his history. For the dream-and-ghost hypothesis of the origin of religion there is not a particle of historic evidence. It finds no support in the Rig Veda, the Zendavesta, the Egyptian monuments, the Homeric poems, the Roman mythology, the Scandinavian mythology, or any of the important records of primæval religion, among which, for this purpose, we may reckon the Old Testament. All those records alike indicate that it was by the great objects of nature, and especially by the sun, that the religious sentiment was first awakened, while that sentiment, to be awakened at all, must apparently first have had its seat in the human breast, like other sentiments and tendencies, the congenital character of which nobody denies. The dream-and-ghost theory is merely a reproduction of the "Animism" of Dr. Tylor, who founds his induction on the beliefs of savage tribes. But the assumption that the beliefs of savage tribes are primæval, and represent the universal tendencies of humanity, seems itself highly precarious. Savage tribes are probably the refuse of humanity, cast away for the most part into the remote and most unattractive parts of the earth. There seems to be no reason for thinking that their beliefs are any more stable than their language, which we know to be in a state of flux. It is surely in the leading races and in the main current of history that reason bids us look for the real tendencies of humanity. To show that the Christian religion had its source in a belief in dreams and ghosts would be a hard task for the most robust Agnostic. Anthropomorphism is a very effective word, almost as effective as Mesopotamia, though not so blessed. It means, after all, nothing but "human," and the argument against the truth of religion, supposed to be conveyed in it by implication, will be found on examination to be fallacious. There are three natures in man—at least there are three aspects under which he may be regarded—the physical, the intellectual, and the moral. Primæval fancy might invest Deity with a human form; but if an educated Christian does this, it is either figuratively, as we speak of the Eye and the Hand of God, or involuntarily, from inability to present to himself a moral being otherwise than in human form, and with a full consciousness that the connection, though it clings to the human imagination, is the offspring of mental association, and not real. In the same way, when we speak of Divine Wisdom or Design, we are fully aware of the total inadequacy of terms transferred from the operations of the human intellect to those of God; Mr. Spencer himself does not suppose that his intellectual formula of the Homogeneous and the Heterogeneous adequately represents the Councils of the Infinite. But to say that the moral nature of man points true to that of the Author of his being is merely saying that we believe in a God. To charge religion with being anthropomorphic in this sense is a platitude. That human morality is identical with that of the Maker and Master of the Universe is the essential conception of Theism, which, whether tenable or not on other grounds, is not proved untenable by the simple asseveration that it is what it purports to be. Mr. Spencer bids us, in place of our anthropomorphic Deity, revere the Unknowable. Why should we revere the Unknowable? We do not revere a problem because it is insoluble, or a riddle because it cannot be guessed. A moral power only can be the object of reverence: such a power Mr. Spencer must at heart believe that there is behind the veil of nature; and reflection will show him that moral character to excite our reverence must be in kind identical with ours.

A MORE special study of history, including the history of opinion, might perhaps make Mr. Herbert Spencer more philosophic and less

acrimonious in his criticisms on Christianity, at which he never fails to fling a stone or two in passing. "The visiting on Adam's descendants," he says, "through hundreds of generations dreadful penalties for a small transgression which they did not commit; the damning of all men who do not avail themselves of an alleged mode of obtaining forgiveness which most men have never heard of; and the effecting a reconciliation by sacrificing a son who was perfectly innocent, to satisfy the assumed necessity for a propitiatory victim; are modes of action which ascribed to a human ruler would call forth expressions of abhorrence; and the ascription of them to the ultimate cause of things, even now felt to be full of difficulties, must become impossible." It is instructive to compare this and a great deal more of the same kind and in the same tone which has proceeded from the pen of Mr. Spencer, with such a book as Sainte-Beuve's "Port Royal." Sainte-Beuve was not a believer in the Christian Revelation, but he was thoroughly versed in history, a profound student of character, and a man of truly philosophic and liberal mind. He sees that the character is the essential thing and not the dogma; and he paints with comprehensive sympathy and kindly insight, as well as with artistic beauty, the characters of the admirable recluses who are the subjects of his book. To him denunciations like those of Mr. Herbert Spencer would seem platitudes. Almost the same may be safely said of Renan. That an alien mass of dogma has, in the course of theological controversy, gathered round the rational and vital truths of Christianity, many Christians, as Mr. Spencer is aware, are fully prepared to acknowledge. St. Paul, protesting against subjection to the Law, set forth, in opposition to it, the redeeming work and merits of Christ in passionate and figurative language, with imagery drawn from the sacrificial ritual of the Hebrews, which irrational exegesis has crystallized into doctrine and presented sometimes in forms repugnant to good sense and to morality. The Reformers again in combating Indulgences and good works, developed and stereotyped in an exaggerated form their doctrine of Justification by Faith, which drew after it that of Predestination. But what is the practical outcome? The religion of the worshippers of Baal, Moloch, or the gods of Mexico, was immoral and cruel. Immorality and cruelty were the result. Why was not the result the same in the case of Heber, Wilberforce, Fletcher, of Madeley, and Wesley, who unquestionably held the doctrine of the Atonement in the form which would be most repulsive to Mr. Herbert Spencer? How came it to pass that though these men served a God more cruel, as Mr. Herbert Spencer thinks, than the Fijian divinity who is represented as devouring the souls of the dead, their characters and lives were examples of the purest benevolence? It would appear that on their minds the Atonement impressed itself simply as a manifestation of Divine Love. In his "Data of Ethics" Mr. Spencer, after a similar onslaught on the professors of Christianity, ends by admitting that "a rationalized version of its ethical principles will eventually be acted upon." In that case, as the ethics can scarcely be entirely separated from the creed, surely philosophy bids us touch the history of Christianity, and even its doctrinal assertions, with a discriminating hand.

A BYSTANDER.

HERE AND THERE.

THE old aphorism that one must go from home to learn news would undoubtedly occur to the average English journalist who read a recent article in the Boston *Home Journal* on "English Gold in American Journalism." Our contemporary reads between the lines of anti-Blaine editorials in the *New York Times* "and some other journals conducted by Englishmen," and sees there unmistakable signs that they are "heavily subsidized to support the party which is given to free trade." A Toronto daily made a similar accusation against an Anglo-Canadian cotton spinner who ventured to make some unfavourable comments upon the spinning and weaving industries of the Dominion. Had such charges been made by anyone but journalists they might have been more easily forgiven; but how gentlemen of that ilk could be so stupid as to suppose a gigantic scheme for the manipulation of American and Canadian trade could be formulated in England without its coming to their knowledge, baffles comprehension. We have more faith in the assiduity of the ubiquitous "special correspondent" than such an admission implies. The insinuation that either the British Government or a ring of English manufacturers have "sought to accomplish commercial injury to America by establishing or subsidizing papers in America hostile to American interests" is of a piece with the whole tenor of the article, and serves only to betray the writer's ignorance of English matters. Perhaps our contemporary would tell us from what national fund these "subsidies" are drawn, if that is the contention, and in return we will assure him that the greatest weakness of English manufacturers to-day is that they will not combine—that