

tively most useful and complete. It is almost superfluous to say that all contained in them is stated with such clearness, and absence of technical phraseology as to be readily understood and apprehended by the business men for whose use they were written. Being made by "Mr. Bonney" they could not have been otherwise.

As husband, father, friend, gentleman, and scholar, his life was not only above reproach, but in him sweetness of disposition, gentleness of manner, consideration for others were mingled with perfect integrity. He lived, worked, and wore himself out for others. His sympathies were world-wide. Of a profoundly religious nature, he saw something of good in all men, and in all creeds. He loved mankind, worshipped God, bowed before human and divine law, toiled for the right, and died with perfect faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and through him an eternity of living conscious, intelligent, personal communion with the good who have been and shall be.

A. N. WATERMAN.

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### PROF. ERNST HAECKEL'S SOLUTION OF THE "WORLD RIDDLE."

*To the Editor of The Open Court:*

The monism of Haeckel is the *reductio ad absurdum* of the idea of a God by proving too much: or in other words, Pantheism = Atheism.

All that is said by theologians, and by ultra deniers, only strengthens the conviction of the present impossibility of accounting for the Cosmos. The unbiassed man can agree with neither, as he can refute neither. He simply *does not know*: and the more he learns, and the more he thinks, the stronger grows the justification for his acknowledgment of ignorance.

He cannot deny the possibility of an anthropomorphic God, however crude and unsatisfactory may be such an attempt to explain the cosmogony. On the other hand, he stands aghast at the knowledge that person must assume to possess who can say "There is no God." Both assumptions are irrational, but of the two the assertion is a shade less irrational than the denial of the existence of a God-Creator, for the reason that the asserter has the slender analogy of our microscopically finite experience to support the view that what is made must have a maker. To the unprejudiced mind it appears impossible to reach conclusions concerning the infinite from a very limited number of observed sequences in the (very small) finite; but the procedure offers at least a faint pretext (however insufficient) for acceptance; whereas the denier has nothing on which to base his tremendous denial but his own inability to find what he denies; and his inability is infinite.

Of the two propositions representing the extremes of assertion and of negation it may be said that *it is perhaps a shade less irrational to assert on the strength of an analogy of unknown value, than to deny on the negative support of our own failure to find*

Accepting Haeckel's hypothesis, there is still ample room for even an anthropomorphic God (however unlikely that may be) before the existence, or first thrill of the "attenuated jelly" (protyle), and during the course of its evolution from Moneran to Homo sapiens.

But with such a God the mystery of the cosmos is merely transferred to Him, and is just as great as without Him, even if we knew accurately the phylogenetic

chain from prototype to man, and the ontogenetic sequence from germination to death.

PHILADELPHIA, September, 1903.

PERSIFOR FRAZER.

## AGNOSTICISM.

IN REPLY TO MR. PERSIFOR FRAZER.

Mr. Persifor Frazer is an agnostic, and he takes the consequences of his doctrine of nescience. He claims that Haeckel's solution of the world-riddle breaks down because he tries to prove too much. Mr. Frazer says that the unbiased man can agree with neither the theologian nor the atheist; "he can refute neither, he simply does not know." According to these principles any theory concerning the world-riddle (the constitution of the world, the nature of man's soul, and its fate after death, etc.) is on the same footing whether it be the superstition of the savage, or the mythology of Greece, or the dogma of some civilised religion, or the private conviction of a naturalist, or even the assured conclusions of science. If that be so, we had better give up all investigation and acquiesce in our ignorance from which there is no hope of escape.

There are two kinds of agnosticism: one is the agnosticism of modesty; the other, absolute agnosticism. The former is a temporary suspension of judgment, the latter a belief in perpetual nescience. The former is not agnosticism proper, but is the natural attitude of a man who does not dogmatise on a subject which he has not yet investigated. The latter is a declaration of bankruptcy, and it acts as a blight on thought.

In our opinion, the problem of God, of soul, of ethics, or the destiny of man and his duties in life,—in short, all the problems of philosophy, are not insolvable problems, but admit of scientific investigation and solution. As to God, we believe that we should first of all ask the question, not, whether or not does God exist, but (1) What do we mean by God; (2) How did the God-idea historically originate? and (3) What are the underlying facts which suggested the God-idea? Having answered these questions from the standpoint of an impartial investigator, we shall be better fitted to attack the original question, whether or not God exists.

There is no need to enter here into a discussion of the subject. We have only reluctantly yielded to Mr. Frazer's request of giving publicity to his note on Haeckel and will repeat here what we have said again and again that among all conceptions agnosticism is the most unsatisfactory, the most unscientific, and the most unphilosophic.

Agnosticism is an important epoch in the history of philosophic thought, but it is so inconsistent and untenable that even now it is fast dying out and will have to be regarded by the historian merely as a phase of transition. P. C.

## BOOK REVIEWS AND NOTES.

LESSONS IN THE STUDY OF HABITS. For Use in the Grammar School, the Home, or the Sunday School. By *Walter L. Sheldon*. Chicago: W. M. Welch Company. Pages, 270.

The author is a lecturer of the Ethical Society at St. Louis, Mo., who has had a great deal of experience in the instruction of ethics. It is a very difficult subject, since the abstract teaching of ethics easily becomes wearisome to both the teacher and the scholars. The present volume has to do with the habits of life, and