

he got through with it the label had three ugly marks on it. The man strutted off down the aisle like a game cock who had vanquished his adversary. I could have made the marks myself, but Uncle Samuel wouldn't have paid me for doing it like he does the other man. This ended my experience with the customs officials and I consider that I got off lucky. It was near dark when we crossed the high bridge over the Niagara river, but I got a good view of the rapids, 255 feet below. I could not see the falls, but will stop on my return and take in the sight, which I will try to describe to the readers of the Torch.

East Orange, N. J.

For the Torch of Reason.

Only a Dream.

BY CHARLES KENT TENNEY.

"Then Joseph, her husband, being a good man and not willing to make her a public example, was about to put her away privily." Matt. 1:19.

"But when he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, 'Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.'" Matt. 1:20.

"For she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." Matt. 1:21.

"Then Joseph, being aroused from his sleeping, did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took Mary unto him, his wife." Matt. 1:21.

This is the story of the divinity of Christ, and upon it rests the foundation of the Christian church, an organization which for many centuries ruled the destinies of the people of the known world, both as to the present and supposed future, and whose effects are today felt by nearly every living being.

As the foundation to support such a structure as the Christian church should be based on absolute truth and reason, it is well to analyze the verses quoted and see if there is any substantial foundation for the faith in the divinity of Christ, the bedrock of Christianity.

In considering this subject, there are two primary questions to be determined: First, whether Joseph ever had any such a dream; and (second) if he did, is a dream sufficient upon which to base a faith and rear thereon an organization to rule and guide the destinies of the human race, now and hereafter?

If Joseph (who is the only man in the world who ever had two fathers, for Matthew, 1:16, tells us that "Jacob begets Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born

Jesus, who is called Christ," and Luke, 3:23, tells us that "Jesus, the supposed son of Joseph, the son of Heli," etc.), ever had any such a dream, he certainly would be the only person knowing the fact, and his statements would, if he were known to be a perfectly truthful person, be proper evidence that he had had such a dream; but on the contrary, he never, at any time, made any such claim. Matthew says he did so dream, but his statement was made long after the alleged occurrence, was based at best on rumor, and how could he, or any one else, say that on a particular occasion a certain person had a dream on any particular subject? From the circumstances of the case no one could know whether he had such a dream unless he related it, and no one claims that he ever did. Matthew's statement, therefore, is of something that he could not possibly have known anything about with any degree of certainty.

But suppose he did dream "the angel of the Lord did appear unto him in a dream, saying, 'Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost'"? It was, after all, but a dream, and dreams are not realities. They are the product of an active imagination while the body has temporarily suspended operations; they are nothing substantial or real. This dream did not demonstrate the truth of that which was dreamed. From the ab-

surdity of the story it is quite evident that it was but a dream, and that is all that is claimed for it; and from the character of the dream it is more than probable that Joseph had been eating mince pie before retiring. In all seriousness, however, an institution of the magnitude and power of the Christian church for good or evil in the world should have something more substantial for its foundation than the mere unsupported statement of one man, that it was rumored that another man at a previous time had had a dream that a child was to be born without a physical father.

The fact would seem to be that the originators of Christianity, having adopted the Old Testament with the story of Adam's fall, must, to bring it support, adopt some method of salvation, and as a part of the scheme the miraculous conception and saving powers of Christ were invented, or rather borrowed from older traditions. With this object in view, the New Testament, a collection of many writings, was written, and as most men were wholly ignorant, the supposed rumored dream of Joseph very well answered the purpose; and from that time until the present the New Testament account has been accepted by the faithful as absolute truth. As President Lincoln once expressed it, when asked to write a testimonial for a book, "For any one who would like a book of this kind, this is just the kind of a book he would like." To those who base their faith on stories of this kind, we suppose this is just the kind of stories they like; but for us, we desire something more substantial than a rumored dream of 1900 years ago upon which to base our judgment.

RIGHT LIVING

... IS A BOOK OF ...



Sixty Excellent Chapters

On the following and kindred Subjects:

Self Control
Self Respect
What is Morality
What is Ignorance
Fraud a Crime
Habit, 2nd Nature
Politeness
Wisdom
Etc., etc., etc.

One of these chapters is Worth more to Young and old than the Price of the book.

... IT SHOULD BE IN ...

EVERY HOME!



Send \$1.00 and receive a neatly cloth-bound copy, post paid.

AGENTS WANTED.

—ADDRESS—

Torch of Reason

SILVERTON

OREGON

Six Tracts to Promote

Scientific Wisdom



In Place of Christianity:

- 1 Can Sins be Forgiven?
- 2 Does Christianity or Science Promote Civilization?
- 3 Is Religion or Science More Reliable?
- 4 Evolution and Comparison of Religions.
- 5 Does Belief in Miracles Benefit?
- 6 Immortality or Annihilation?

JUST THE THING

to hand to your Christian friends. Send 2 cents for 6, or 6 cents for 25 tracts, to ELIZA MOWRY BLIVEN, Brooklyn, Conn., or send 10 cents for 50, either kind or assorted kinds, to

THE LIBERAL UNIVERSITY CO.,

Silverton

Oregon

FIVE

Reasons Why

YOU

SHOULD HELP TO BUILD

The Liberal University

AT SILVERTON, OREGON.

1. It will help many young men and young women to a higher education who otherwise will grow up without its great advantages.
2. It will educate workers for the great forward march of Freethought and Progress.
3. It will forever silence the accusation that Secularists have never done anything.
4. It will hasten the time when Reason and Love will reign, and when superstition and hate will be forever gone.
5. It will give you an opportunity to build yourself and others a monument, while you yet live, that will do a million times more good than the most costly one of cold, senseless marble.

If all help a little, we can accomplish much. Will you help a little?