

ven" afterwards to see him, and heard "unspeakable words" (Cor. 2:11). Then notice how all animals were let down in Acts before Peter from heaven, with the command, "Kill and eat" (Acts 10). Where in heaven did all those animals come from? Where were those coelestial stockyards?

But these stories, apparitions and "visions" are all too manifestly real as subjective myths, and too absurd as objective facts, to follow further. It is a plain case of "spiritual materialization". Neither Paul nor any known human being ever pretended that he saw Jesus "in the flesh". He saw only "in the spirit". A few years ago the "Apocalypse of Peter" was discovered in Egypt, duly written in Greek, of which he never knew a word, and which I have here. With it was discovered the corresponding "gospel" written afterwards, which is also here in Greek, plainly written to support the vision. The Jewish Christians never wrote gospels; they had no such facts, nor need of such facts. They had real "visions" from which they obtained all needful information from Jesus on earth or in heaven. Take, for instance, the revelation of the Lord's Supper to Paul—"For I have RECEIVED of the Lord that which I have delivered unto you. How that," etc., describing the "vision" of the supper (1 Cor. 11:23). This vision was duly expanded in the "gospels", in which, for instance, Luke is made to say that he sets forth "in order a DECLARATION of those things which are most surely BELIEVED among us, even as they were DELIVERED from the beginning unto eye witnesses and ministers of THE WORD" (Luke 1:3). This is not the preface of the narrator of objective facts collected, but of subjective clues and facts delivered to "eye witnesses" in "Apocalypses".

Then how did the "gospels" come? Subjectively, as a matter of course. When the visionists and their believers had to explain their Kingdom and its Savior to the Greeks and Gentiles of objective mind, they had to make their Messiah, or Christ, i. e., Jesus, a historical fact and person. So under the influence of their hearts and visions the subjective fancy, out of the best materials known and collected, wove the gospel stories graphically and in separate, piecemeal PARAGRAPHS, or "books". These were finally, nearly a hundred years after Christ's "ascension", not death, collected into gospels "according to Matthew", or other deceased disciples, or visionists, or both, whose names, appearing in the stories, seemed likely to make them seem to be good witnesses of the stories told.

Of these gospels over thirty were well known of old, and many called "Apocryphal" have come down to us in whole or in part. Only the four

in the "New Testament," are called "canonical"—i. e., recognized by the Catholic church, and thence inherited and most strangely adopted by the Protestants, who rejected everything else Catholic, even to the Apocrypha, without any real reason or consistency whatsoever.

But the work of making gospels, that is "Lives of the Christ," has never stopped from the lean Matthew and Mark down to the Frenchy-fanciful scholar Renan, and the florid "Ben Hur," of our Gen. Wallace. As histories they are all of equal value—that is, none whatever! Taken as ideals and sentimental romances, the last may be the best, because while it is the most absurd and ridiculous objectively, subjectively it is the most advanced kind of IDEAL painting—"Ecce Homo?" The last appearance of "Christ" I have seen is in the novel "Quo Vadis," where he emits those words in Latin(?) from heaven, and thus drives Peter back to his martyrdom, and furnishes the title to that most absurd novel and travesty of history.

Every scientific historian, every man of common sense ought to protest against these impossible "Lives of Christ"—ancient or modern—being considered other than ideal romances or "divine fictions." They are, otherwise, simply abuses of credulity and of the most earnest and sacred affections, and make the general conception of truth and truthfulness in history or in our life impossible.

It is strange that our Deistic thinkers of the last century, like Voltaire and Rousseau, gave credit to these Greek gospels so far as to apparently admit the existence of the "man Jesus" and to crown him with eulogies. They seemed to have dropped all capacity to reason when they come to these stories. Even Thomas Paine, who hit right on nearly every other Bible question from Jonah down, thinks there "may have been" a good man Jesus. Now let us see.

IT ALL BEGINS

with, and so depends upon "angels," a prophetic dream, a virgin mother, his supernatural conception and strange birth, a life of miracles, with crucifixion, resurrection and bodily ascension to a heaven—in the sky!—and his promise that he would surely return from thence (heaven in the sky) during the lives of those then listening to him, and THEN introduce the "kingdom of heaven" on earth, and hold a general judgment day.

What more absurd than to stand up for these things in this "Age of Reason?" Now, forty million dollars would be cheap for an "angel," an animal with BOTH arms and wings. The same amount—cheap for a virgin mother. The same for only one miracle, or a sky heaven—which the telescope shows is nowhere. How can a dream deal

with other than past sensations? When did the Christ ever return as promised? Never! Or if he did, what is the use of living for a past event? That last question buries the whole story and its motive. There was no such event; and was and is no such heaven to come from, or to go to!

The Christ of the past was a word, a myth which blossomed into visions of illusion—as did all those the other sun-gods, heroes and saviors of old. But around this Christ myth were gathered a mass of other myths and imagery and sacred symbols, from India, Egypt, Greece, Rome and the North, until the mighty fabric of church-dogmas, creeds and ecclesiasticism, was built up gradually through the centuries. But it all rests at bottom upon this myth of a Messiah, a god-man, and of a "firmament-heaven". With their disappearance from the scientifically possible, from true astronomy and true human history, all that mighty fabric of "Faith" falls,—however long it may take many to come to a realizing sense of the fact. As Faust says of that old world:

"A Demi-God [Truth] hath stricken it down!
We bear the ruins over into nothingness,
And lament o'er the beauty that is lost.
More splendidly build it again,
In thine own bosom build anew!
With clearer sense
Let newer songs
Ring out therefrom!"

With wonderful insight, Goethe called Christianity the "Religion of Sorrow". When we consider the dogmas and creeds that overgrew its nucleus, he might well have called it the "Religion of Horror". Think of the ridiculous, inconceivable story of creation out of nothing, the rib-woman; the Fall of Man; the Babel and Flood; the Total Depravity; the damnation of all of our race before it existed, except by the agony and crucifixion of its Savior,—and that only to save a small part of the race; and that small part to suffer ever and ever in a heaven above by knowing and seeing the never-ending agony of their fellow beings in eternal hell beneath. Even this rescue of the few by the Savior is attained as the result of his own life of humiliation, agony, crucifixion and torture and terrible death. Was tragedy more awful and horrible ever realized or ever conceived?

How can we help but rejoice and be "exceeding glad", on this day of the Sun-birth, that the Sun of Science has arisen and dissipated to all people who will open their eyes, these old, horrible nightmares of the soul? Every one should know now that these and all the Old Testament stories, instead of being divine and infallible revelations, are positively known to be not even Hebrew stories, but the old myths of the Chaldeans, Assyrians and Persians, who inhabited the often-flooded clay-valleys of the Tigris

and Euphrates; or, of the still more ancient Egyptians. That they all existed centuries before the Hebrews ever picked them up, and that they have no more objective truth or reality than the "Arabian Nights". They are simply the subjective fancies and legends of the imaginative Eastern peoples,—their old soul-clothes, which the Hebrews, in their early nakedness, have picked up and passed on to us—all of which was the most cruel joke ever played upon us by Father Time?

The New Testament added to these old Eastern myths, that of the Christ appearance, his life of miracles, and his terrible "crucifixion" to appease an angry Father. The Sun of Science has dissipated all of this horrible myth,—and that should, beyond measure, add to the joys of this day of the Sun! Why not? What more dreadful than to have to believe that the vast mass of the human race had been created to add to the glory of their God by eternal torment?—except to have to add to it, the belief that the same God consented to except a few by the the horrible murder of his only son? Then, on earth, think of the wicked obloquy and persecutions that have followed the Hebrew people for their supposed part in this crucifixion of a Savior who was already "slain from the foundation of the world"! Then think of the cruel wars, persecutions, tortures, burnings!—and the agonies of those who have supposed themselves forever damned! Add to that the repression of freethought, joy and growth of the race,—whose progress has been actually arrested nearly two thousand years by the constant expectation of the end of the world, with its judgment day and heaven and hell!

AND NOW WE ARE LIBERALS!

All free and "out in the clear!" How can we ever rejoice enough over our deliverance? The Fourth of July, grand as it was and is, is as nothing to this emancipation of the mind of man from these Eastern nightmares. It was the sun that did it—our Sun, the Sun of Science. With our joy of merry Christmas, let the thankfulness of gratitude be added to those Scientists who, through toil, torture, sufferings and death have "borne the torch of truth in the search for truth," and made possible our great emancipation!

So now let us turn the leaf from the old to the new, and ask SCIENCE as to the future of Christmas? Science in history is evolution; the religions and civilizations of the ages have lived one above another like the strata of geology, because the last and highest has always resulted from those below. There has always been some human power, ambition or motive which has been the soul of each civilization—producing and sustaining it. Those horrors could never have been ex-