

ceived by the same genius that conceived the rest. The genius was inspired by the same sentiment. The sentiment sprang from the same human emotion. The emotions were awakened by the same phenomena, old, but ever new, familiar, but ever astonishing and entrancing,—the return after a long absence, of the creator of the visible universe."—To which thought we may add—the revival of human life in the birth and life of children,—the new human life, a new generation!

Our scientific apotheosis of childhood in the babe, of course carries with it the apotheosis of the mother and motherhood. You may see both in the word picture just given from Mr. Frothingham, and then by the eye in this copy on the wall of Le Rolle's splendid picture, "The Nativity". Notice how away back there in the darkness of the stable, the NIMBUS of spiritual glory proceeds from BOTH mother and child, and throws its golden light over animals and the wondering men, and the MAGI in the foreground. That picture scientifically interpreted means, that both mother and child are forevermore sacred and inviolable, and must have the blessing and protection of Humanity as the most tender and sacred parts of itself.

Here is another great picture, "The Star of Bethlehem". Notice we have the exact picture described by Mr. Frothingham, with the star and cherubs above the mother, and the Magi, the "wise men" of earth, at her feet. What may that mean? Why, that the mother is the true center of the world—and is to be its principal care, for around her and her babe its learning and art and utilities are all devoted ministrants.

But above all the pictures you see here a copy of T. G. Kitchell's (of Indianapolis, Ind.) composite photograph of the three hundred famous paintings of the Madonna. You may measure your degree of real spirituality by ability to analyze and then synthesize the feminine elements in the great Madonna paintings. We can not go far into that now. But they are all "composites", all human, and combined make the chief IDEAL leading the race, which Goethe, for the first time, and as the triumph of all art and humanity, added to the Trinity as a real Goddess, a flight no "church" had ever dared to take. Faust closes with the prayer to her thus:

"Virgin, Mother, Queen,
GODDESS, gracious ever be!
[Youngfrau, Mutter, Königin,
Göttin, bleibe guadig!]

The eternal womanly—
Draweth us ever
Upward and on!
[Das Ewig-Weibliche
Zieht uns hinan.]

When Raphael's painting of The Madonna was exhibited a few years ago it was not seldom that people,

especially Italians, dropped on their knees before it. Superstition, do you say? Yes, but it struck the most free and scientific with an awe that was silent,—for only the stupid could fail to see in it the composite reflection of the love and innocence, the suffering and devotion, the sorrow and triumph, the final hope and joy of the human race. It was womanhood, as Goethe saw it, rising out of and embodying the awful past, prophetic of and leading towards the nobler and glorious future!

Now we must turn from picture-ideals to our reals. They, too, are all composites. No real virgin-mothers ever existed. Let every one then make and honor his own Ideal of womanhood, and make all women sacred as included in it. Also the child, and so the grown ideal Christ or Humanity that is to be? No one individual ever did or can make it. The pictures of Christ are all composite ideals, whether in words, or paintings, or sculpture. The first character-sketch of Christ in the four gospels has been shown by Mr. Soloman in his "Jesus Identified" [Bouton & Co., New York] to be made up chiefly of four of the Hebrew rebels against the Romans, with plenty of "filling" from the Essenes Therapeutae, with current prayers, miracles, sayings, prophecies and parables. It is because composite and never personal, that these myth ideals touch so many phases of life with a truth that seemed supernatural—a truth stranger than fiction. But all of this truth Science saves and makes more useful to us than ever. We lose nothing real, true or good by carrying the illusions over "into nothingness", and recognizing that "the only wisdom is in truth".

As Theodore Parker said of Sunday, "It is indeed a blessed day when we get over the superstition of it". So we may say of this Sun, Yule and Christmas Festival—this birthday of the Christ of and in Humanity, "the Christ that is to be". The mythic Messiah-Christ of the past, with its "religion of sorrow", and the horror which has collected around it, never lived, never died, and never will appear upon this earth with its New Jerusalem coming in the sky. But the Humanity of which it was formed as an unconscious symbol is now actually here, is being born on this very day in millions of homes, and will embody and incarnate more than was ever conceived of in the myths of old. The Religion of Science, of Humanity, in a word, the RELIGION OF THE NOBLE, is here!

Young and old! let us rejoice over the clouds that Science has rolled away, and the future it reveals—glorious and certain under the laws of human history and evolution. Rejoice in the old that each year will ring out, and the newer, truer and better that each year is sure to

bring in! On New Year's Eve we shall hear of "The Triumph of Humanity",—"The Epiphany" of the Christ that is to be. In order to connect the two festivals, let us now listen to Mrs. Hosmer's rendering of "Ring Out Wild Bells", of Tennyson. Then for the show, the play, that TREE and the presents, from which this address has kept the "youngils" too long.

The Christ Myth.

A NOTE TO MR. WAKEMAN'S ADDRESS.

1. It is hardly proper to refer to the Christ "gospels" or "lives," ancient or modern, as deliberate "lies" or "forgeries." The early gospels were semi-conscious growths out of visions, traditions, rumors, gossipings, etc., in addition to supposed prophecies which "inspired the facts" necessary to their fulfilment—"in order that the prophecy might be fulfilled," as we frequently read! Thus the gospels were orally woven by the fancies of many enthusiasts in detached fragments or "paragraphs," and were made always "more certain" by repetitions, until they began to be written down in Greek for Greeks, and were finally collected so as to make a whole "gospel." The gospels according to Matthew and Mark grew up to sustain Peter's visions and influence, Luke that of Paul; John, the last, grew up largely out of the Apocalypse, which was attributed to "John the Divine." The Apocalypses of Enoch (Jude 14), Peter, John, indeed the whole class of "Apocalyptic literature" [See Ency. Brit.] should be looked over together with all of the Apocryphal gospels to plainly see the relation of the two. The so-called epistles of Peter and John in the New Testament clearly confirm the visional origin of "Christian" beliefs and their dissemination, as do also those of Paul. The solution above presented, and the expected coming of Christ within a few years, make the New Testament for the first time intelligible and interesting reading. We thus learn that primitive Christianity was never more than a STATE OF EXPECTANCY—"carpet-bag" religion—waiting for "thy kingdom" to come, and with no morals, polity or mode of life, suitable for a permanent residence on this planet. It was a subjective iridescent dream, a mirage of the oppressed human imagination picturing in the sky a prophecy of love, liberty and equality, which will one day be more than realized in an "Earthly Paradise," unless evolution fails mankind.

2. The negative evidence against the historical existence of Christ or Christianity is overwhelming. There was no note ever made of Christ's life or miracles, nor of the "darkness" over the "whole earth" at his death! The Brethren were first called "Christians" at Antioch

by their opponents long after the supposed Christ had disappeared.

The Talmud refers to a "Jesus," an "illegitimate," who was executed for "sorcery" some seventy-five years before "our" Jesus ought to have been, if he ever was, but not a word about him.

Not a single contemporary author, not a scrap of writing, names or refers to "our" Jesus. The need of such reference was so great that Christ-passages were "forged" into Josephus; all of which are now plainly exposed and admitted by all.

The Rev. S. Baring-Gould, the English churchman, in his "Lost and Hostile Gospels," closes the story by this frank admission: "It is somewhat remarkable that no contemporary or even early account of the life of our Lord exists, except from the pens[?] of Christian writers. That we have none by Roman or Greek writers is not, perhaps, to be wondered at; but it is singular that neither Philo, Josephus, nor Justus of Tiberias should have ever alluded to Christ, or to primitive Christianity."

After the Christians began to "make trouble" for the Romans, i. e., about a hundred years after Christ was supposed to have lived, we find Roman accounts of them by Tacitus, Pliny and Suetonius, which are often quoted. These contain echoes of or about a "Chrestus" or "Christus," who was supposed to have been the God or founder of this "malignant sect." Later on cursing accounts of the most revolting kind appear, by similar reflection of hostility to the Christians, in the later Talmud and Jewish writings. The prettiest echo, however, of the Christ-myth is found in a letter purporting to have been written by "the Roman centurion, Lentulus, who took part in the crucifixion." It appeared in Latin during the early Middle Ages, and gave such a beautiful word-painting of the "Christ" that it was accepted generally as true. So pleasing was it to Thurlow Weed, the well-known New York politician and editor of the Albany Evening Journal, that he used to reprint it every year, near "Good Friday." We will print it once, if any one will send us a copy; for that, and the "handkerchief of St. Veronica," are the earliest "pictures" in line or words left us of "our ascended Lord." The holy manger, and the wood and nails of the cross used to be abundant, but as they have no subjective meaning or importance they will probably be allowed to disappear. T. B. W.

Remember, if you send us the names and addresses of 25 of your Liberal friends and acquaintances, we will make you a present of a copy of the Torch of Reason Song Book No. 2. This will only cost you a few minutes' work and a two-cent stamp.