**JANUARY 5, 1912** 

## The Commoner.

# Mr. Watterson on Christianity

News report in Louisville Courier- | either it gives itself over to theology Journal: Mr. Watterson's address -- the pride of opinion-or yields itwas entitled "Christianity Versus self to the celebration of the mam-Theology." He spoke as follows:

"The groves were God's first temples," the poet reminds us as truth. Never in the history of the of purgatory: 'You may go further he sings his Forest Hymn to the gentle rhythm made by the twitter of birds and the rustle of leaves, "the groves were God's first temples."

I am not sure that the exaltation we feel in the completion and consecration of this noble edifice is wholly responsive to the spirit of God that before all else must envelope and permeate the religion and the life we call Christian. There are those who think that crude simplicity alone befits a sanctuary. The amplitude and the stateliness here may mark an unconscious dissonance between our state of being and our confession of faith; between our professed oblivion. humility and our love of display; for they seem somewhat at odds with the lowly attributes of the Nazarene we adore and the apostles whose light shines still upon us from the stormy tal Jew of the ages, a good rabbi in banks of Jordan and the far away shores of the Sea of Galilee.

"They didn't know everything down in Judee," another famous but impious poet tells us; and since crimes of the church we call Christwenty intervening centuries have set the pace for lordly dome and cathedral spire, for the pageantry, the pomp, pride and circumstances of the church, both militant and holy, it is not for a poor layman, like me, to venture an opinion, or to utter a discordant note.

In my personal experience of many lands I have not found that the grandeur and beauty wrought by the been engulfed beneath oceans of liberty," cried Madame Roland, "how hand of man have obscured from me the radiance of the Christ, or the two thousand years of embittered name!" Oh, churchism, may I not glory of the heavens. I have not controversy. During the dark ages say, how much nonsense is trolled off found that storied urn, or animated coming down even to our own time, in thy name! bust has ever diverted my attention from the wondrous tale of the fishermen, or that piles of marbles and alabaster encircling the altar, instead we were assured in those early days never any body of men-never any of the earlier archways of nature was the seed of the church. The sanhedrim, consistory, church conabove it, have come between me and blood of the martyrs was the blood gress, or party convention-with the worship of God. Whatever we of man-weak, cruel, fallible man absolute power. Honest men are behold around us and about us, that -who, whether he got his inspira- often led to do, or to assent, in asalone which makes us good men and tion from the Tiber, or the Rhine, sociation, to what they would diswomen is essential; the grace of from Geneva, from Edinburgh, or dain upon their conscience and re-God; of God in everything, but most from Rome, did equally the devil's sponsibility as individuals. En masse of all, of God within ourselves; God in our eyes, God in our mind, God vice-regents of heaven, as they tremism is always wrong, it is the Dr. CANNADAY, 174 Park Square, Sedalia, Me. in our hearts; and, whether this claimed to be, knew much or seemed more wrong and the more dangerous comes to us as pealing anthem swells to care much about the word of the because it is rarely wanting for the note of praise, or is brought by the chant of the choir invisible from the tree-tops and the skies, aroused within me the only devil I have ever personally known. My reading of late years has embraced not-a few works which seek, or which affect, to deal with the mystery of life and death. In my mind they leave a mystery still. For all their learning and researchtheir positivity and contradictionnone of the writers know more than I think I know myself and all that I think I know myself may be abridged to the simple rescript, I know nothing. The wisest of us reck not a Jew; a glorious, unoffending Jew, whence we came, or whither we go; the human mind is unable to conceive the eternal in either direction; the soul of man being inscrutible even to himself.

mon of unrighteousness.

the blessing of eternal sleep, and Christ, teaching the blessing of eternal life, mankind has been long divided, but slowly, surely the influence of the Christ has overtaken that of the Buddha until that portion of the world which has advanced most by process of evolution from the primal state of man to the miracles of modern discovery and invention, now worships at the shrine of Christ and Him arisen from the dead, not at the sign of Buddha and total

A little while ago, in response to some remarks of mine touching my wonder that the Jewish people should continue to reject the single immorthis city sent me an elaborate protest in which he undertook not, indeed, to revile Jesus of Nazareth, but to enumerate and emphasize the tian. His communication was wholly controversial. It was not delivered, I thought, with the very best grace. But I could not gainsay its indictment of Christianity as history records it, and I printed the Hebraic screed without comment, or reply.

The blessed birthright from God, the glory of heaven, the teaching and example of the Prince of Peace, have ignorance and superstition through many crimes are committed in thy the very light of truth was shut out from the eyes and hearts and minds ing the wisest and best of men with of men. The blood of the martyrs absolute power; but I would trust work in God's name. None of the extremism always prevails and exgentle one of Bethlehem, whom they genial and convincing argument to had adopted as their titular divinity, plausible sophistries, furnishing conmuch as men in commerce adopt a genial and convincing argument to trade mark. It was knock-down and the mind of the unthinking for drag-out theology-the ruthless machinery of organized churchism-the for me to instruct Dr. Powell rank materialism of things temporal -not the teaching of Christ and the spirit of the Christian religion, which so long filled the world with crime and tears. I might have made that answer to my friend the rabbi. I might have said to him, "What matters it whether Jesus was of divine or human parentage-a human being or an immortal spirit-he was done to death by a mob of hoodlums in Jerusalem; why should not you and I call Him Master and kneel together in love and pity at his feet?' "I believe in God, the Father, Almighty; Maker of heaven and earth, and Jesus Christ, his only son, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; He descended into Hell, the third day He arose again from the dead; He ascended into Heaven, and sitteth on

song, nor your faith, nor your religion. What boots it? Can you discover another in word and deed, in luminous, far-reaching power of speech and example, to walk by the side of this the anointed one of your race and of my belief?"

"As the Irish priest said to the I do not believe that it is the British prelate touching the doctrine S world was Jesus of Nazareth so in- and fare worse, my lord,' so may I teresting and predominant as at this say to you-though the stars in their moment. Between Buddha, teaching courses lied to the wise men of the desert, the bloody history of your Judea, altogether equal in atrocity to the bloody history of Christendom, has yet to fulfill the promise of a Messiah-and, were it not well for those who proclaim themselves God's people to pause and ask themselves, 'Has He not arisen already?'"

The world is at this very moment appalled by what is happening among the Confucians in China and the Christians and Mohamedans in Africa. The crusades-forms of collective insanity-were not half so barbarous and relentless. What shall, what may, the church do?

But what church? In Rome there is war between the Quirinal and the Vatican, the government of Italy and the papal hierarchy. In France the government of the republic and the church of Rome are at daggersdrawn. England and Germanyeach claiming to be Protestant-look on askance, irresolute, not as to which side may be right and which wrong, but on which side "is my bread to be buttered." In America, where it was said by the witty Frenchman we have fifty religions and only one soup, there are people who think we should begin to organize to stop the threatened coming of the pope, and such like! "Oh,

I would think twice before trust-



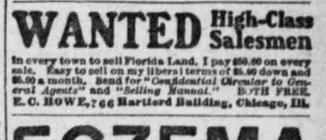
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"The night has a thousand eyes, The day but one,

Yet the life of the bright world dies, With the dying sun;

The mind has a thousand eyes, The heart but one,

Yet the light of a whole life dies, When the day is done."

All that there is to religion therefore is faith; all that there is to the the right hand of God, the Father church, the spirit of God shining upon Almighty; from thence He shall come to discuss the things of this world us, through belief in Christ our Lord. to judge the quick and the dead." There is nothing else. They tell us the church is losing its hold upon ligion. It is my cradle song. It may objective point with them shall be men. If that be true it is because not be-nay, it is not-your cradle the regeneration of man through

whatever it has to propose. It is not in his duty. It is not for me to plan a campaign for this exceedingly well-housed religious institution. But, I would never have ventured to come here if I had not believed that the whole force of its organization-the genius of its pastor, the influence of its wealth and culture-were to be heaven-bent toward the love of man through grace of God. If that be wanting nothing else is much worth while. Not alone the love of man for woman, but the love of woman for woman and of man for man; the divine friendship taught us by the sermon on the mount; the religion of giving not of getting; of whole-hearted giving; of joy in the love and the joy of others.

"Who giveth himself with his gift feeds three,

Himself, his hungering neighbor and Me."

. I would have Dr. Powell, and all other ministers of religion, as free "That is my faith. It is my re- but, with this difference, that the

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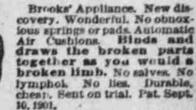


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