

## The Commoner

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### POISONING YOUNG MINDS

The following has been going the rounds of the press:

"A model two-foot shelf of books for the American country school child has been selected by the American Library Association and the National Educational Association, designed to do for the boy or girl what Charles W. Eliot's five-foot shelf seeks to do for the mature mind. First place among the books in the new shelf goes to Louisa M. Alcott's 'Little Women,' with Lewis Carroll's 'Alice in Wonderland,' second; Defoe's 'Robinson Crusoe,' third; Mark Twain's 'Tom Sawyer,' fourth; and R. L. Stevenson's 'Treasure Island,' fifth. The other books, in the order named, are: Nicolay's 'Boy's Life of Abraham Lincoln,' Kipling's 'Jungle Book,' Andersen's 'Fairy Tales,' Aesop's 'Fables,' Stevenson's 'Garden of Verses,' Pyle's 'Merry Adventures of Robin Hood,' Lamb's 'Tales from Shakespeare,' Malory's 'Boy's King Arthur,' Van Loon's 'Story of Mankind,' Wiggins' 'Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm,' Burton E. Stevenson's 'Home Book of Verse for Young Folks,' Dickens' 'Christmas Carol,' Irving's 'Rip Van Winkle,' 'Mother Goose,' Dodge's 'Hans Brinker,' Hagedorn's 'Boy's Life of Theodore Roosevelt,' Hawthorne's 'Wonder Book,' Seton's 'Wild Animals I have Known' and 'Arabian Nights.'"

It seems interesting enough until you carefully analyze the list. You find fiction, like Robinson Crusoe, and the Arabian Nights, Jungle Tales, Fables, Adventure, Fairy Stories, Stories of Wild Animals and Boy Lives of Lincoln and Roosevelt, BUT NO BIBLE STORIES. Room for "Tom Sawyer," but no reference to the boys of the Bible or the prophets or patriarchs—no child stories of Jesus or of His apostles. The committee forgot the great women of the Old and New Testament, but did not overlook "Little Women" and "Alice in Wonderland." Why would the American Library Association and the National Educational Association ignore everything religious? Was it an oversight? Hardly. The list gives conclusive proof that the committee deliberately ignored child literature based on the Word of God. While they carefully EXCLUDED ALL religious books they INCLUDED Van Loon's "History of Mankind" which gives to man a brute origin and uses pictures to illustrate an imaginary ascent from animal to man.

The atheists and the agnostics, having taken charge of our higher institutions of learning are now extending their anti-Christian propaganda to the graded schools. McMillan Co. has published a book by Margaret E. Wells, entitled "How the Present Came the Past." It is intended for "young children" and is being used in some of the public schools. It traces man's ancestry back to the brutes and illustrates this fictitious line of descent by pictures of chimpanzees and of men and women covered with hair. Now Van Loon is to mislead in the libraries those who escape the poison of the school room. Christians, it is time to inspect the schools and libraries that you support by taxation to see whether they are undermining the religious faith of your children. No teacher can cram enough into the mind of a child to offset the harm done if he takes faith out of the child's heart. "Out of the HEART are the issues of life."

W. J. BRYAN.

## Why Wanamaker?

In the death of Honorable John Wanamaker the United States has lost its greatest merchant, if not its greatest business man; the Christian church its most prominent layman; the cause of good government a pillar of strength; and multitudes a friend. For weeks to come the papers will be full of tribute, incidents, and anecdotes drawing lessons from his life; and well they may. The passing of such a figure is an event that cannot be overlooked. Adults will become conversant with his unique career and children will be reminded of the possibility of success which lies before every American boy.

Why Wanamaker? What is the explanation of the long continued and remarkable growth of his business and influence? A large percentage of those who engage in the mercantile business fail—why did Wanamaker succeed? Of those who have succeeded, few have approached him in the largeness of their accomplishments. How shall we account for what he did?

The first answer is that to know the secret of Wanamaker's success one must know Wanamaker. He built his life upon the Bible; he was a Christian and took his Christianity seriously. He was a religious man; his faith was simple and took possession of him at an early age. The first recorded words of Christ, uttered when He was twelve, were: "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" Religion is a business—the most important business of life. Wanamaker entered upon the Father's business before he engaged in the mercantile business. At the age of nineteen he began teaching a Sunday School class and continued teaching this class until he died. He was eighty-four years old and sixty-five years of this time he was a teacher. Few have made such a record in church work.

His advance as a store-keeper showed that he did not neglect the business from which he secured his livelihood, but he never allowed his money-making to encroach upon his work for the Master. As he prospered he gave more and more to the cause of the church and to the advancement of Christianity.

Higher critics did not disturb him. He did not search the Bible for things to doubt or contradict; he accepted it as the Word of God and followed it as his guide. God prospered him and he shared his prosperity with those who were engaged in the work of the church. He carried the spirit of Christianity into his store as well as into the Sunday School room. He lived his Christianity.

Anyone of the millions in America who is willing to follow Wanamaker's plan of life can make a success of whatever he undertakes. Circumstances may help or hinder but chance alone cannot explain such a career as that of John Wanamaker. He improved opportunities.

Faith is necessary—faith in God and faith in man. The Bible taught him to trust in the Almighty and to have fellowship with others. He loved God with all his heart and his neighbor as himself.

It was my privilege to know Mr. Wanamaker quite intimately for many years and it so happened that my train schedule carried me through Philadelphia on the morning of his funeral. I visited the church in which his body lay in state and saw the stream of sorrowing friends who passed by to take a last look at the one whom they had learned to respect and love. I contributed a few flowers, orchids for Mrs. Bryan and lilies of the valley for myself, and on the card described Mr. Wanamaker as he appeared to me: In Memory of one whose life was a living spring—still flowing. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord"—they "rest from their labors; and their works do follow them."

W. J. BRYAN.

### TWO THINGS NEEDED TO HASTEN REFORMS

December 21, 1922.—Mr. George E. Ryan, president, King County Democratic Club, Seattle, Washington. My dear Mr. Ryan: Complying with your request for an expression of opinion, I beg to say that I am heartily in sympathy with the work of your club. The gains made by the Democratic party last November were so great and so uniform throughout the country that the members of our party have a right to begin the campaign of 1924 with confidence. While we cannot intelligently discuss candidates for some time yet, we can discuss the issues that make candidates, for the platform is more important than the candidate and ought to determine who is to run upon it.

The election left no doubt as to the growth of

progressive sentiment in both parties. The revolt throughout the country against the reactionary leadership of the Republican party and the reactionary tendencies of that leadership cannot be ignored by those who give any attention to our politics. Big business has carried its arrogance so far that the masses increasingly protest. Now is the time for the Democratic party to propose remedial legislation demanded for the relief of the people. There are a number of problems which cannot be avoided, such as the bringing of peace in the industrial world, the suppression of the profiteers, the relief of the farmers, and the use of our moral influence for the promotion of universal peace (it is possible for us to advise when advice is desired without surrendering independence of action on our part).

There are two things which will help to bring all the reforms that are needed; first, legislation which will provide for the nomination of the presidential candidates at a national primary. This will put the presidency in the hands of the voters—a necessary step towards the establishment of the rule of the people. The Federal law need only designate the day and prescribe a few fundamental rules for the governing of the primary, leaving the states to complete the work by the passage of laws providing for the state control of these primaries.

The second important reform is the establishment of a National Bulletin through which the public can secure authentic information, first, as to the issues before the people, second, as to the arguments for and against the various propositions upon which the people vote; and third, information as to the merits of candidates legitimately before the voters. At present all the avenues of information are in private hands and the presentation of issues is often one-sided in the contested states. Then too, without a National Bulletin the cost of sending out literature, even to a legitimate extent, in behalf of any national candidate almost excludes a poor man from the contest. There should be no pecuniary qualification for any office, even the highest. Candidates ought to be able to run upon their merits and not be dependent either upon large fortunes of their own or large contributions from rich friends. With presidential primaries for the selection of candidates and a National Bulletin for the information of the people, the Democratic party will have a splendid chance to present its side, and that is all that is necessary to secure the confidence and support of the public. Success to the work of your organization.

W. J. BRYAN.

### RECEPTION FOR NEW GOVERNOR

(From Lincoln Journal, Jan. 5.)

What was declared by some to be the largest crowd that ever attended an inaugural reception at the mansion, greeted Governor Charles W. Bryan and the other state officers Thursday evening. For three hours a steady stream of people flowed past the receiving line and shook hands with and congratulated the successful candidates. The receiving line was composed of the following: Governor and Mrs. C. W. Bryan, Lieutenant-governor and Mrs. Fred G. Johnson, Secretary of State Charles W. Pool, State Auditor George W. Marsh, State Treasurer and Mrs. Charles D. Robinson, Commissioner Dan Swanson, State Superintendent John Matzen, Attorney General O. S. Spillman, Chief Justice A. M. Morrissey and his niece, Miss Morrissey; Judge and Mrs. C. B. Letton, Judge and Mrs. W. B. Rose, Judge and Mrs. James R. Dean, Judge and Mrs. Chester H. Aldrich, Judge and Mrs. George A. Day, Judge and Mrs. E. G. Good, Railway Commissioner and Mrs. H. G. Taylor, Commissioner and Mrs. T. A. Browne, and Commissioner and Mrs. C. A. Randall. W. J. Bryan was present but took no active part. State Adjutant General H. J. Paul, assisted by Major H. C. Stien and the state staff, was in charge.

The crowd at times overflowed onto the lawn while waiting for a chance at the front door. Once inside it pushed and jammed its way down again. Despite the valiant efforts of the military staff, there was no time when anyone in the front hall or on the stairway could not lift their feet from the floor in perfect confidence that they were in no danger of falling.

### ADDRESS WANTED

Mr. David R. Baker, care of Certain-teed Products Corporation, Woolworth Building, New York City, wishes to know the present address of his uncle, David Reeves Smith. He will be very grateful to any one who will kindly send him the information.