

MISCELLANEOUS.

IN MARS, WHAT AVATAR?

BY DON MARQUIS.

Do creeds of earth have any worth
On yonder spinning star?
Which godheads sway the Milky Way?
In Mars, what Avatar?

What priestly din makes clangor in
The dog-star's Shwe-Dagon?
Which thousand suns hang tranced above
Audacious Ajalons?

What Eros rules the dearer schools
'Neath Saturn's triple ring?
When morning breaks 'round Mercury
What wakened Memnons sing?

Does some San Grael lure errants pale
Through wastes of yon dim star?
What God-man reigns in Mercury?
In Mars, what Avatar?

THE PRACTICAL SIDE OF THE RELIGION OF SCIENCE.

To the Editor of The Open Court:

I have been an interested reader of your utterances for some time past but I do not remember to have seen any program for the practice of religion from the theological point of view that you occupy. I suppose that even though you do not regard the Christian churches as hopelessly in the wrong yet, because of the deviation from the original teachings of Jesus which you think has arisen in the ages past, you would hardly be able to cooperate with any church in any active work for the improvement of society. Probably no existing organization fully squares with your ideas of what should be attempted for the development of the religious and moral nature of humanity.

Now if it is not asking too much will you not take this whole matter from your point of view and give us a full exposition of your program for both the Christian and non-Christian peoples of the world?

H. L. LATHAM.

The question proposed by Mr. H. L. Latham is legitimate and ought not to be passed by unanswered. The difficulty of the answer consists in the fact that the religious conviction which constitutes the faith of The Open Court Publishing Company would not preach to its followers a definite policy as to their church affiliations. It is true that there is no church in existence which would exactly correspond to that faith, but the editor feels no hostility for that reason to any one of the established churches and religious congregations, Christian, Jewish, or Pagan. He has been invited from time to time to speak in churches, sometimes by clergymen who belonged to the ranks of the so-called orthodox and is in friendly relation with representatives and orthodox members of all religions and creeds.

Whenever there is in one town a sufficient number holding convictions similar to ours, who desire to band themselves together in a church congregation, the editor would advise them to found what in a former article, in the January number of *The Open Court*, 1903, has been defined as "the Lay Church." It recommends itself for several reasons. It makes it possible for people of different views to associate in a religious fellowship, if they have but the one purpose in view, to seek the truth and to respect sincerity of conviction.

Wherever it seems unadvisable or premature to found such a lay church, the religious interest should be kept alive within the circle of the family. Parents ought to watch over the religious development of their children with a reverent but critical tendency, allowing the growing generation to familiarize itself with all forms of faith in a friendly way, which can be done by visiting different churches, and becoming acquainted with the doctrines, rituals and practices of each.

The article on "The Lay Church" will be reprinted in the advertising pages of this number.

INDEPENDENT CHRISTIANITY IN JAPAN.

To the Editor of The Open Court:

My attention has just been called to an article in the January number of *The Open Court*, headed "Christianity in Japan" which speaks of the recent notable movement of the Japanese Kumiai Churches toward self-direction and self-support. The fact reported is one of great significance and marks a decided step in advance among those churches. There is one statement, however, which I most respectfully ask permission to correct. This is summed up in the declaration, "The inference throughout is clear that the missionaries maintain a dictatorship in church matters which results in establishing a competition against the native church rather than a helpful support and alliance." I cannot speak officially for other Missions, but I can speak with authority for the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, under whose work the Kumiai Churches were organized and which has been conducting mission operations in Japan since 1869. As the work of this Board has been perhaps most conspicuous there of any Board, because of the prominence of the Doshisha University and Kobe College for Girls, and because of the aggressiveness of the Kumiai Churches and the prominence of many of their Japanese leaders, the remark above quoted would naturally be interpreted as criticising this Board and its methods of work in Japan.