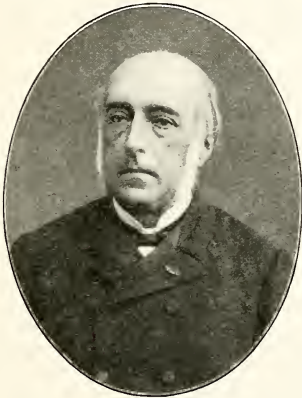


## ALBERT AND JEAN RÉVILLE.

We congratulate ourselves on being able to present to the readers of *The Open Court* the portraits of MM. Albert and Jean Réville, of Paris, France, the moving spirits of the International Congress of the History of Religions, to be held during the Universal Exposition at Paris from September 3d to 9th, 1900. M. Jean Réville's own article in the present number will give adequate information regarding the purpose, character and constitution of this Congress, and we may therefore limit ourselves in this note to a brief biographical sketch of the two personalities who have been its main organisers.

M. Albert Réville, the president of the Congress, was born at Dieppe, France, in 1826. He is a Doctor of Theology, which in Europe is an honorary degree denoting scholarship and talents of high distinction, and was for twenty-two years pastor of the French church at Rotterdam, Holland, where he acquired the repu-



ALBERT RÉVILLE.



JEAN RÉVILLE.

tation of being one of the foremost preachers and theologians of French Protestantism. Since 1880, he has been professor of the history of religions in the Collège de France at Paris, where he created a branch of instruction which did not exist prior to his time. Since 1886 he has also been president of the Faculty of Religious Sciences in the École Pratique des Hautes Études at the Sorbonne. So successful and zealous has he been in the prosecution of his aims that it is doubtful whether the facilities for study and research in this department of religious science are to be surpassed in any other university of the world.

Besides numerous articles in the *Revue de théologie de Strasbourg*, in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, and in various other magazines, M. Albert Réville has written a large number of works, of which the principal ones are as follows: *Essais de critique religieuse* (1860); *Études critiques sur l'Évangile selon St. Matthieu* (1862); *Théodore Parker, sa vie et ses œuvres* (1865); *Histoire du Dogme de la divinité de Jésus Christ* (1876); *Prolegomènes de l'Histoire des Religions*

(1881); *Les Religions des non civilisés* (2 vol., 1883); *Les Religions du Mexique, de l'Amérique centrale et du Pérou* (Hibbert Lectures, French edition, 1885); *La Religion Chinoise* (1889); *Jésus de Nazareth* (2 vol., 1897). M. Réville's *Manual of Religious Instruction* has been translated in several languages. As appears from one of the above-cited works, he has been a Hibbert lecturer and he is also known in this country as a contributor to *The New World*, of Boston.

M. Jean Réville is the son of M. Albert Réville, and has been scarcely less active than his father in the field of religious investigation. He was born in Rotterdam, Holland, in 1854, is also a Doctor of Theology, and one of the Protestant leaders of France. He occupies the post of chaplain in the Lyceum of Henry IV. at Paris, and has been a lecturer on the History of the Christian Church at the *École des Hautes Études* at the Sorbonne since 1886 as well as at the Faculty of Protestant Theology since 1894; he has also been editor of the *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions* since 1884.

His principal works are as follows: *La doctrine du Logos dans le IV<sup>e</sup> Évangile et dans les œuvres de Philon* (1881); *La Religion à Rome sous les Sévères* (1886; German translation by G. Krüger in 1888); *Les Origines de l'Épiscopat* (1894); and *Paroles d'un libre-croyant* (1898).

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### THE CURVE OF IMMORTALITY.

We have printed as an Appendix to the present number of *The Open Court* an essay which is likely to be of real interest to many of our readers, and which for others will possess at least the attraction of a curiosity. The author, who is a septuagenarian, was for several years a University professor of Astronomy and subsequently for a third of a century scientific editor of one of the great Chicago dailies.

To forestall at the outset all possibility of misunderstanding, attention should be called to the fact that the author does not claim for his argument the value of a *proof* of the doctrine of sentient existence after death and that he expressly remarks that it would be "absurd" to do so. In addition to this explicit reservation of the author, we would insist on the following independent and general critical point of view which should be carefully pondered by the reader both before and after his perusal of the argument. Mathematics, being in one of its aspects, the science of form and of the combinations of form, there is no formal relation conceivable that cannot be expressed by it. Its world of pure and possible forms is absolutely inexhaustible, and is infinitely richer than the world of material and physical forms. It does not follow therefore that because a mathematical relation exists there must exist corresponding to it in the so-called objective world some definite physical reality. We have geometries of *n*-dimensions but no worlds of *n*-dimensions. Now as to the peculiarity of the curve in question, namely its completeness in one of its parts and the break in its continuity, it is to be remarked that it shares this property with a very large number of other algebraical curves, and that these curves present such "infinite variety" that there is scarcely a dogma of religion so wild or exceptional that could not be put into very close analogy with some one of them. It would be very easy, for example, to construct or find an analogy in algebraical geometry for the Buddhist doctrine of the transmigration of souls, or of the dogma of cycles of existence. In sum, the mechanism for graphically representing algebraical possibilities, which Descartes gave us, is far more powerful and comprehensive than even the wildest fancies of the founders and dog-