

VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER.

AS POINTED out in these columns as long ago as 1880, "Christendom," since 1878, is passing through the sifting and testing of the close or "harvest" time of the Gospel age, foretold by the apostles: a sifting which is to result in the fall of many in nominal Spiritual Israel. "A thousand shall fall at thy side, ten thousand at thy right hand, – but it shall not come nigh thee [the true saints, the *body* of Christ], only with thine eyes [enlightened by the spirit of the truth] shalt thou behold the reward of the unfaithful." – Psa. 91:7,8.

The Prophet describes the testings of this evil day, or day of falling. Its "*pestilence*" of infidelity he describes as operating secretly, hidden, as in the night darkness, – spreading spiritual sickness and death among the millions who outwardly confess, saying, Lord, Lord, while their hearts are far from him. Its "arrows" of "bitter words" (Psa. 64:3), slanders and misrepresentations of the faithful, he shows will be open as at "noonday;" – yet these "arrows" will not harm the faithful, for they "shall never fall" (2 Pet. 1:10,11), but, glancing off them, all others than the pure in heart will be caused to fall. The real enemy, as the Prophet shows, is the great Adversary, Satan, the "fowler," the ensnarer – his human agents being found amongst the deceived ones: and he prefers the most talented and influential he can obtain.

He is finding thousands of these amongst the professed ministers of Christ who, seeking honor one of another and not solely divine approval, are anxious to pose as "advanced thinkers," "higher critics," etc. These read, more correctly than do the masses, the trend of sentiment, the revolution of religious thought from faith in the *ransom* for sinners paid by the precious blood of Christ, to a theory of Evolution and self-development. They perceive that a large proportion of the "best educated" laymen as well as themselves already are Evolutionists and anti-ransomists: they are anxious to be

considered *leaders* in thought among their flocks, but not anxious to alarm and drive off any of the "sheep," and especially are they thoughtful of those who have the long golden fleece.

Cases like that of Prof. Charles A. Briggs of the Presbyterian Church, who stated himself so plainly as to arouse the laity to demand his trial for "heresy," are exceptional and purely accidental – the results of miscalculation. Prof. Briggs, finding the Evolution and higher criticism ideas so popular amongst the theological students, miscalculated the general ripeness and readiness of Presbyterianism on this line. He supposed that he would be famous in a night – he *knew* correctly the sentiments of his own presbytery and the "upper classes" of Presbyterians with whom he came in contact: he did not realize that the Presbyterians of the "back-woods" were so unprepared to welcome him as a new Moses. Others more cautious, not only in Presbyterianism but in all denominations, waited to note the effect. The public did not applaud Prof. Briggs, and hence he was deserted, and in the interest of peace became a heretical "scape-goat," and was allowed to wander off unhonored into the fold of the Episcopal Church and into silence.

But the heresy which Prof. Briggs expressed *too soon* is growing, spreading everywhere, in all denominations: it is being "wisely," secretly, presented by ministers and Sunday-School teachers everywhere, and if we understand the Scriptures aright, it will not be [R2451 : page 83] long until all but the heart-consecrated children of God will be poisoned by it.

But when we say that nearly all will *fall* – "a thousand shall fall at thy side," – we do not mean that they will all fall into open immorality, nor that they [R2451 : page 84] will abandon church organizations, nor that the fallen ones will even know that they have fallen. On the contrary, the fallen ones as usual will think that they are rising higher and higher – getting rid of error, etc. They will be thoroughly blind to the fact that with the errors and superstitions they

are getting rid also of the truths and the faith which alone constituted them Christians in God's sight. This is the sense in which Babylon is falling, since 1878, and hence God's call, "Come out of her, *my people*, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." – Rev. 18:4.

BIBLICAL CRITICISM AMONG METHODISTS.

The public was surprised indeed, to read among the press dispatches of March 7th, published in the leading journals, under startling headlines –

"THE REV. S. P. CADMAN APPLAUDED, WHEN HE READS A PAPER HOLDING THAT THE GOOD BOOK CANNOT BE THE RULE OF FAITH. HE CALLS ATTENTION TO ITS DISCREPANCIES AND SAYS THE CHURCH WILL HAVE TO MAKE A NEW RULING ON INSPIRATION."

It seems that the Methodist ministers of New York and vicinity have of late been discussing at their Monday gatherings some of the Bible's "errors," as viewed by agnostics and "higher critics,"

- That Joshua commanded the sun to stand still.
- That the Red Sea divided before the Israelites.
- That Jonah was in the belly of a fish three days.
- That Aaron's Rod turned into a serpent.
- That Moses tapped a rock and waters gushed out.
- That the earth swallowed up Achan and his companions.
- That Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego were in the furnace unharmed.
- That God spake to Moses out of a burning bush.
- That Daniel stayed unhurt in a den of lions.

On Monday, March 6th, Rev. Cadman read a paper affirming, "*That the inerrancy and the infallibility of the Bible are no longer possible of belief among reasoning men.*"

About four hundred ministers were present, and on the rising of the speaker and the announcement of the topic the clerical audience expressed its sympathy with their brother in that he was willing to champion their views in so bold a statement of it, by hearty applause. The gentleman had not finished when the appointed time expired and "his auditors were so deeply interested in him that they readily voted that he finish. When he sat down the preachers loudly applauded the discourse," says the press report.

We quote from the published reports of the discourse which we have not seen denied in Methodist journals, altho a month has since elapsed: –

"This bold, portentous utterance – involving the most radical departure from accepted tenets of the Methodist Church since its very foundation – was made before the most representative body of Methodist clergy in America. It included the vast majority of the preachers of Greater New York. It is the first announcement of an impending controversy, which may shake the Methodist Church to its very foundation stones.

"The acceptance of Dr. Cadman's proposition, heard with respect and applause by the New York ministers, is comparable to the adoption of a new constitution for the United States. It places the Bible on the basis of historical works on other than divine subjects: it rejects the authenticity of all parts of Holy Scripture which are repugnant to human reason.

"UNDERMINING THE BASIS OF THEIR FAITH.

"As Mr. Cadman himself said yesterday, the Bible was accepted as the true source of authority and inspiration by Martin Luther when

he established the Protestant Church. Luther made the Scripture the base of all faith. It is now proposed to abandon the teachings of the early fathers of the Protestant Church.

"The speaker referred to the Old Testament, half of whose pages, he said, were of unknown authorship. The New Testament likewise contained contradictions. The Bible, the church, the ministry, he said, were agencies. The true source of inspiration was neither a book, nor a church, nor a ministry, but the living Christ himself.

"The weekly meetings of the Methodist ministers take place in the Methodist Book Concern building, on Fifth avenue. They are held in secret. The congregations have not known anything concerning the discussion of this vital change in doctrine. This publication will be the first intimation they will have had that the faith in which they have been reared is threatened with an organic change that will make it no longer the faith of Wesley.

"It also goes without saying that the enunciation of this proposition will not tend to heal the differences between the Methodist Church North and the Methodist Church South, which were rent apart by the civil war, for the Southern Church has rejected time and time again kindred innovations.

"But Mr. Cadman insists that, whatever the church may decide on the question in the future, it will not destroy the belief in the chief and final source of Christian inspiration, a belief in Christ, the Son of God.

"In taking up his subject the preacher stated the proposition which he would prove:

"'That the inerrancy and the infallibility of the Bible are no longer possible of belief among reasoning men.'

"THE TWO CRITICISMS.

"The speaker referred to the great change which had taken place in the methods of Bible criticism within the last fifty years. There should no longer be any confusion between literary criticism and the criticism [R2451 : page 85] of inspiration. It had been said in former times by authorities of weight that the two criticisms conflicted. This was not true. They were not on the same plane. Inspiration appealed to the spiritual ear. Literary criticism was addressed to an ascertainment of facts from a human standpoint. Mr. Cadman illustrated his meaning by saying that it was one thing to examine, classify and discuss the mechanism of a great organ, and another to pass judgment upon the music which proceeded from it. No literary criticism could affect the divine music breathed into the soul of man by the life of Jesus Christ.

"The Bible, he said, was compiled much as is any other book. It was written from the records and witnesses of the time. It had been impossible to determine the authorship of much of the Old Testament. Half of its pages, said Mr. Cadman, were of unknown authorship. The same was in a measure true of the New Testament. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John differed in quoting words said to have been pronounced by Christ upon a given occasion. Parallel passages were not alike.

"Mr. Cadman referred to that much-discussed question of Christ's reference to the miracle of Jonah and the whale. Those who have taken the Old Testament in its entirety, believing all and every part of it, have based their theology in part upon Christ's reference to Jonah, when, in Matthew 12:39,40, he said:

"But he answered and said unto them: An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and there shall no sign be given to it but the sign of the Prophet Jonas.

"For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of man be three days and nights in the heart of the earth.'*

*See explanation in our issues of [April 1, '97](#), and [March 1, '98](#).

"There had been, the preacher said, a great conflict upon this speech of Christ. It had been particularly a bone of contention, because as a matter of fact Christ did not remain in the earth three days and three nights, but two nights and a day. Mr. Cadman said that he had settled the matter in his own mind by saying that he was willing to suffer from the disease of suspended judgment so long as he knew that Christ did arise. It would always be impossible to reconcile the facts of Christ's burial with the facts of his alleged statement, and it would be forever useless to discuss whether he had ever said what St. Matthew attributed to him, or whether he had lain as St. Matthew quoted Christ as saying he would lie. But this should never deter Christian men from believing in the Christ and in his life.

"When Luther separated his followers from Papacy he had turned from priests and priestly interpretations of the Bible to the Book itself. He had placed the Bible before mankind as the source and authority for inspiration. Mr. Cadman said he regretted that these early fathers of Protestantism had not gone further and urged as the highest source of inspiration Christ himself.

"The speaker said that the trend of thought among the best minds in the Methodist Church during the last fifty years had been toward a better knowledge and a newer view of Christ himself rather than of the Bible. He said that there had been a vast increase in the number of the 'Lives of Christ' in the last decade: that the energy and force of Christ as the incarnation of God was becoming better understood every day. *He regarded as inevitable a restatement and a rejudgment of the church upon the infallibility and inerrancy of the Bible.*

"The Bible itself gave authority for a belief that God was in the ocean, in the firmament, in the rocks. Science's contribution to the knowledge of mankind went hand in hand with a belief in God. By this statement he did not mean to agree with those philosophers who had used the word God as a peg on which to hang their vagaries: but nevertheless he believed in the [R2452 : page 85] demonstration of God in the seas, in the mountains, in the various forms of life on this planet.

"There were means of salvation outside of and beyond and before the Bible was written. That must be conceded by every one. The Bible was an agency, the church was an agency, the ministry was an agency.

"The church had dabbled too much in the distant streams of theology. It had examined the streams, but not the source, which was alone pure. The streams had been polluted by conflict and dissension.

"The ministry had taken up too much time in unraveling knots of theology to the neglect of God himself.

"The leading authorities of the church had discussed the questions involved in the parables of Christ. It had been urged that even if the events named in the illustrations the Lord used were not of actual fact, that did not destroy their value as moral lessons. So, also, it had been urged that if the story of Jonah and the whale had been an allegory like Bunyan's 'Pilgrim's Progress,' it nevertheless had force and effect, for the Prophet Jonah without doubt stood on a very high spiritual ground.

"But whatever position the church took – whether it held that the Bible must be accepted, as it stands, as the revealed truth, as the Word of God, as compelling faith because it was the Word of God, or as a historical document, valuable, ineffably valuable, because of its real substance – the decision would never affect the faith of Christian men in the Holy Trinity – in God the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost."

With more zeal than discretion the Rev. J. B. Gallaway of the Third Presbyterian Church of Paterson, N.J., put in an appearance among the Methodist ministers the following Monday, apparently to criticize Rev. Cadman's position, but he was soon identified and his voice drowned by applause for Rev. Cadman, [R2452 : page 86] and amid cries of "Put him out!" the gentleman was gently hustled out "in a decidedly ruffled condition."

When the press reports were published, the New York M.E. "divines" were astonished that their views should be considered extreme – Rev. Cadman no less than the others. They had been so united in their views that they were surprised that the reporter should think them strange. It was another case of honesty among preachers to an extent the public cannot yet appreciate. But the public of "Christendom" is following these leaders rapidly: if only the leaders have yet *lost* faith in the Bible and its doctrine of the ransom, the others are rapidly *losing* this – the saving "faith once delivered to the saints." – Jude 3.

Interviewed by a reporter, Bishop E. G. Andrews, who was present during the address, said, "I do not care to discuss the question." Bishop Stephen M. Merrill, who was not present, said, "I don't want to think of it. It will not amount to much anyway. I have nothing to say either of Cadman or his nonsense." Rev. Cadman himself said of the matter: –

"I was surprised when I saw the article in the Journal. I regard my paper as a *conservative statement of the trend of modern Methodist theology*. The questions I have discussed must be settled sooner or later. I have no objection, under the circumstances, to the publication of my views."

We are to understand, then, that, bold as these words may appear to some, they were not half the truth, but a "*conservative*" statement. And they represent the "*trend* [or tendency] of modern Methodism." This is just what we are emphasizing, – the movement is

going on and on, in the same direction with increasing momentum, not only among Methodists, but among all classes of Christians who do not now receive the sealing in their foreheads. – Rev. 7:3.

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When we remember how nearly our own feet came to slipping in this same manner thirty-one years ago, it gives us great sympathy for others. At that time, confused by the contrary doctrines of Christendom and the irreconcilable antagonism of many of its chief teachings (*in re* hell, etc.) to the simplest kind of justice and reason and love, the writer concluded, much against his will, that he must abandon the Bible as an *inspired standard*: he would regard its writers not as knaves, but as well-intentioned tho deceived men. He would give most credence to the New Testament writers, yet could not regard them as inspired or reliable, because they believed the Old Testament prophets to have been inspired and quoted their words as inspired. He reasoned, as others are doing to-day, that, if the New Testament writers had been inspired, they could not have been deceived *in re* the Old Testament writings; and that the inspiration of the apostles could not have been plenary or direct, but merely an inspiration in a secondary sense, as we sometimes use the word, when we say that music is inspiring, or that the truth is inspiring to all who receive it into honest hearts.

Exactly like Rev. Cadman, his mind centered upon Christ as the great revelation of God to men, and he would hold to Christ, even tho he felt that he must drop the Bible as a standard.

But *what* should he believe respecting Christ? was the next question. How could he determine which of the apostolic statements were true, and which were their "mistakes"? He soon saw that, if he considered himself able, *qualified* to select the wheat and reject the chaff of apostolic testimony, he would be obliged to consider himself *greater* than the apostles – more inspired than they. Of humble mind, he could not do this which many to-day have no hesitancy in

doing. He looked again at the plain, unvarnished tale of the New Testament and noted that the apostles displayed no evidences of fanaticism, and that all their reasonings and deductions were eminently moderate and logical. He noted also their purity of life and of teachings, their unselfishness and self-sacrificing zeal, and concluded that these matters must be given weight; and that such cool, noble, zealous men should not be accused either of knavery or fanaticism, when they claimed special endowment with power and wisdom for their particular work.

Coming to the consideration of our Lord Jesus, he concluded that he was dependent upon these witnesses for all that he knew respecting him who "spake as never man spake," and that he could not consistently accept a part of their testimony as truthful and reject another part. Further reflection pointed out that our Lord himself, according to these honorable witnesses, quoted from the Old Testament in a manner which clearly testified his faith in the divine, plenary inspiration of the prophets and in the general correctness or truthfulness of its merely historical portions: – Jonah and the great fish; Noah and the flood; the destruction of Sodom and of "Lot's wife," etc.

The question then was between rejecting *all* or accepting *all*. Carefully and prayerfully he considered the matter and reached the conclusion that he had never yet examined the Scriptures purely on the merits of their own testimony. He had followed the usual custom of judging the Bible in the light of what the various creeds of Christendom *say* it teaches: and yet he was aware that these various creeds in many particulars directly antagonize each other. He resolved to thoroughly investigate the Bible, to see what *its* theory might be, interpreted by itself to a mind stripped of all reverence for human tradition, and willing, yea desirous [R2452 : page 87] to find in the Scriptures a divine revelation. He felt his need of a standard or test of truth; he felt that he dare not trust or lean to his own understanding – nor yet to the understanding of others, on questions so wholly beyond

human knowledge and experience. He felt, moreover, that it is but reasonable that we should expect that God, having wise, just and loving plans and purposes respecting mankind, should make some *revelation* thereof, that would be reasonable and understandable to those in harmony with him and desirous of knowing and doing his will, however hidden and obscure from others.

The results of these investigations are well known to WATCH TOWER readers, and are set forth in the volumes of the MILLENNIAL DAWN series. We found that for centuries various sects and parties had split up the Bible doctrines amongst them, blending them with more or less of human speculation and error; and that the misplacement of the truth frequently made of it gross error. We found the important doctrine of justification by faith and not by works had been clearly enunciated by Luther and more recently by many Christians; that divine justice and power and wisdom were carefully guarded tho not clearly discerned by Presbyterians; that Methodists appreciated and extolled the love and sympathy of God; that Adventists held the precious doctrine of the Lord's return; that Baptists amongst other points held the doctrine of baptism symbolically correctly, even tho they had lost sight of the real baptism; that some Universalists had long held vaguely some thoughts respecting "restitution." And so, nearly all denominations gave evidence that their founders had been feeling after truth: but quite evidently the great Adversary had fought against them and had wrongly divided the Word of God which he could not wholly destroy.

Our work since has been to bring together these long scattered fragments of truth and present them to the Lord's people – not as *new*, not as *our own*, but as the Lord's. So far from desiring to *make* something new, we are most careful to avoid both in letter and spirit either taking from or adding to the Word of the Lord; for we are fully convinced that "the Word of God is sufficient," "that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." – 2 Tim. 3:17.

What blessings, what riches of grace, have come to us and to others of the household of faith through this bringing together of the jewels of divine truth so long scattered amongst various denominations and misset [R2453 : page 87] in tarnished human theories! What harmony, what beauty, what refreshment we now have in that which before was insipid, incongruous and distracting! How firm a foundation we now have for faith, hope and love! What a contrast to our former vague hopes, dim faith or credulity, and cold love – three-fourths fear!

But as we claim that what we present is not *our own*, not *new*, but "The Old Theology" – so old that it had been lost sight of for centuries – we must disclaim any credit even for the finding and rearrangement of the jewels of truth. "It is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes." The writer wholly disclaims superior ability or qualification for the reorganization of the truth in its present solidarity. As the time had come for the bringing together of the scattered thoughts of past centuries in the marvelous inventions of our day, – so the time had come for the bringing together of the fragmentary hopes and promises of God's Word scattered through Christendom. To deny that the Lord has simply "poured out" this harvest time blessing of "present truth" in his own due time and in his own way, would be as wrong as to claim it as of our own invention. "Poured out" exactly expresses the truth on this point too, for he neither "burned the midnight oil," nor racked his brain, nor otherwise forged the chain of truth with heavy sledge blows of human reason on the anvil of knowledge. On the contrary, it came gradually, silently, as comes the morning dawn: the only effort necessary was to keep *awake* and face in the right direction. And the greatest aid in so doing was the effort put forth to awaken others of the "household of faith" and point them to the light and in turn to urge upon them the necessity for serving also, if they would overcome the lethargic "spirit of the world," and be ready to go in to the marriage of the Lamb.

To deny that the "marvelous light" of present truth is of the Lord's providence as truly as was the light of the Jewish "harvest," and the lesser light of the period of "The Great Reformation," would be to deny that we are in the "harvest" of this age, in which the Lord specially promised his people just such refreshment – "meat in due season," "things new and old" – set forth afresh under his own supervision.

In view of the fact that we are in the testing time, when (in the Church) every man's faith and works are to be tested "so as by fire" (1 Cor. 3:15); in view of the fact that we are now in "the evil day" when the question is not so much, Who shall fall? but, "Who shall be able to stand?" (Rev. 6:17) what shall we conclude respecting the *conditions* on which one may "never fall," but have an abundant entrance to the Kingdom now near at hand? – 2 Pet. 1:11.

Several conditions are laid down in the Scriptures.

(1) All of the "brethren" will be awakened in season to put on "the *whole* armor of God" as in contrast with the small pieces of the armor worn by various denominations in the past – "in the night." Whoever [R2453 : page 88] shall be left asleep and in darkness and thus not prepared to "stand" in this evil day, will thereby make it evident, whatever his professions, that God who readeth the heart did not find him worthy of the light of present truth. "Light is sown for the righteous, gladness for the upright in heart." – Psa. 97:11.

(2) All once awakened must be sufficiently appreciative of the "marvelous light" to rejoice greatly therein. They must also take heed, lest they become overcharged and spiritually drowsy by "the cares of this life," etc.; and must use energy in putting on the whole armor of God – not only the "helmet" to protect the intellect from the "fiery darts" of Evolution and agnosticism, but also the "breastplate" of righteousness to protect the heart, and the "shield" of faith for use on all occasions as necessity demands; and besides these they must have the "sword" of the truth, the Word of the Lord – grasping it by the

handle and not by the blade, that they may defend themselves and others in this conflict with the powers of darkness, with which this age ends. Lastly they must prepare for the rough pathway by putting on the "sandals" of full consecration to the Lord, even unto death. – Eph. 6:11-17.

(3) All such soldiers of the cross will be fiercely assaulted by the Adversary, and, to be able to stand, must "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints."

(4) One of the final and most searching tests of these "brethren," and the one under which probably the most of those once awakened and armed will fall, will be, – love for the brethren. Seemingly many will fail at this point and be therefore accounted unworthy of an abundant entrance to the Kingdom on this score. Whoever has the spirit of love according to the pattern (Rom. 8:29), is expected to agree with the Apostle Paul's statement, – "Because he laid down his life for us, we ought also to lay down our lives for the brethren." – 1 John 3:14,16; 1 Pet. 1:22; 3:8.

This, like all other tests, will be most pointed and conspicuous during this time of special privilege and special trial in the end of the age. (Rev. 3:10.) Let us consider how it will come that we may be the better prepared to meet it successfully. (a) It will recognize brotherhood neither along the narrow channels of sectarianism, nor on the unlimited plane of worldly disregard for the divine Word which declares for "the brotherhood of man." It will recognize children of the Evil One and children of God: and all of the latter will be esteemed and loved and served as "brethren" – all trusting in the precious blood of Christ for forgiveness, and fully consecrated to the Lord's service.

(b) If such are seen anywhere, in "Babylon" or out of her, asleep, fettered and blinded by false doctrines and superstitions, by a soldier of the cross who has gotten awake and put on the armor, it is his duty, as it should be his pleasure, to speed to his relief in the wisest and best and quickest manner. Self-ease, self-repute nor any other self-ish spirit

must hinder him; the spirit of love must energize him to do all in his power – even to the laying down of his life – for the brethren. All who have this spirit must yearn to help those in danger of losing their hold upon the Lord after the manner of those now blindly leading them into unbelief.

(c) The same spirit of the "Captain" (Heb. 2:10) will lead him to so love not only the brethren that are still asleep, but if possible still more ready to lay down life for the brethren who, like himself, have gotten awake and are putting on the armor. He will sympathize with their trials by the way and assist them to put on the sandals and to adjust every piece of the armor. Should any be specially weak and liable to stumble he will not despise him, nor revile him, even as the elder brother, the Captain, would not do so. On the contrary, he will be the more watchful and helpful toward the weaker even tho he most enjoy himself in the company of the stronger. This is not the time for the strong to gather by themselves for mutual admiration and enjoyment; – that will come later on to all such who so love the brethren as to lay down their lives on their behalf. These will hear the Master say, "Well done, good and faithful servant: enter into the joys of thy Lord."

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Only in the light of present truth is the Bible explainable to reason. In its light we see that certain books are inspired directly, others, historical, needed not inspiration, but merely supervision of the Lord, that the truths appropriate for each age might be so stated as to be understood by the consecrated class, the "brethren," under the guidance of the spirit in due time.

Only from the *inside* can the great plan of God be seen and appreciated, and only the "brethren" are admitted to this inside view. "If any man will do his [the Father's] will, he shall know of the doctrine."
– John 7:17.
