

FRESH ATTACKS UPON THE BIBLE.

"WOUNDED in the house of its friends," is certainly true of the Bible today; for it has no outside foes one-half so antagonistic, so injurious. But it is not the Bible's friends who thus attack it – but enemies, who under guise of being its friends have received honored positions in the household of faith, – who, from the vantage point of its pulpits and colleges and editorial chairs, insidiously stab the Bible, while professing to love and reverence it.

Three volumes have just issued from the press, each one calculated to undermine, shake and overthrow the faith of many of God's people, who could not be reached or shaken by the same testimony if it reached them from disreputable or infidel sources. The first of these is volume III. of the series being published by the higher critics. The second is by Rev. Lyman Abbott, D.D., successor to Henry Ward Beecher in Plymouth pulpit, but now editor of the *Outlook*. The third is by Judge Charles B. Waite. It is not for us to judge that these essayists are dishonest; nor that they are seeking rewards of fame as leaders of thought, in a direction toward which all but the very few will shortly follow them, "as sheep having no shepherd." Rather, we will suppose these writers to be thoroughly honest – intent upon telling the truth as it appears to them. Indeed, we see in this movement a fulfilment of the Bible's predictions respecting our day, the ending of the present age.

We may not state the matter too strongly, when we declare that God is back of the many present-day movements which are ensnaring many and making shipwreck of their faith, in the sense that he designedly does not hinder such erroneous presentations, but, on the contrary, permits circumstances to foster and prosper them. Thus the Lord declares through the Apostle, "God shall

send them strong delusions that they may believe a lie: that they all might be damned [condemned, as unworthy a place in the Bride of Christ] who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness; – because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved." – 2 Thes. 2:10-12.

The very men who are thus becoming blind leaders of the blind into the ditch of unbelief are men who have had first-class opportunities as respects education and opportunities for Bible study; men who, had they loved the truth and sought it, would have found it clear, convincing, precious; but who, rejecting the Lord's leading, and leaning to their own understandings, have become vain in their imaginations; have cut loose from their faith-anchorage, and are helplessly drifting – they know not whither.

Does some one say, – It is strange that God should prosper rather than oppose these strong delusions! Yes, and the Lord himself calls it "his strange work," "his strange act." (Isa. 28:21.) Describing this "strange" prospering of error and unbelief the Lord says: –

"Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lip do honor me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men: therefore behold, I will proceed to do a marvelous work among this people, even a marvelous work and a wonder [miracle]: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid." – Isa. 29:13,14.

This language was applicable to typical Israel at the first advent, and consequently is applicable to nominal, spiritual Israel in the present "harvest" time of this Gospel age. The above is merely a rehearsal [**R2813 : page 164**] of what the Prophet explains more in detail in the previous chapter. (Isa. 28.)

In verses 9 to 12 the Lord explains the preaching of his message through imperfect human lips, and that this message, rightly received, should have brought rest and refreshment for the weary and heavy laden: yet to the majority its blessed influences were lost, so that as a whole Christendom or churchianity is about to go backward and fall and be broken and snared and taken in the general *unbelief* that is even now sweeping over the civilized world. – Verse 13.

The secret strength of this delusion, which has made the Word of God of no effect through human tradition, and prepares the way for this great falling away, is mentioned in verses 15 and 18. It is the covenant made by the great teachers with death, and their agreement with hell (*sheol* – the grave, the state of death). Under this agreement or covenant, which all the creeds of Christendom endorse, *death*, which God's Word styles an "*enemy*," is accepted as a friend; while the *grave*, the Bible teaches us, is the great *prison-house* of mankind, from which in due time the glorified Christ will deliver all of the prisoners who will accept his righteous terms – by restitution processes. – Luke 4:18-21; John 5:28,29; Acts 3:19-21.

"Hear the word of the Lord, ye scornful men [disdaining teachers] that rule this people." You have thought it *wise* to teach the people that death and the tomb are not enemies – that the dead are more alive than ever they were, either in a place of bliss or of torment. You feared to tell the people the truth, that the dead are dead, lest this should decrease your superstitious hold over the minds of the people. You said: The people will prefer to think of their friends going at once to glory, without waiting for the second coming of Christ, and a resurrection of the dead, and **[R2814 : page 164]** it will heighten our influence over sinners to tell them an untruth – to misrepresent to them the words *sheol* and *hades* and to make them believe that these words represent a flaming torture-chamber, presided over by

legions of furious demons, and that at any moment they may by accident be dropped into that eternal torment if they are not members of some of the sectarian systems, which we have organized, but none of which were or will ever be recognized by Jesus or his apostles. You have thus practically in effect said, "We have made lies our refuge and under falsehood have we hid ourselves," and are safe – no matter how great a storm may arise; – even tho an overflowing scourge of infidelity come, we are safe in the ignorance of our people, and in their dependence upon our dictum for their faith and hopes of the future: as we have succeeded in "bamboozling" them in the past, we shall continue to do in the future. – Isa. 28:15.

But the Lord's answer is No! This very error shall work your ruin, and the overthrow of your system, and all identified therewith shall suffer loss. (Vs. 18; 1 Cor. 3:15.) I have laid the only sure foundation, Christ Jesus, and he that trusteth him, and he alone, shall not fall, but "be able to stand" in the great time of testing, near at hand. For "judgment also will I lay to the line and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail [hard, cutting truth] shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters [truth] shall overflow the hiding place," and force you to show your subterfuges. (Verse 17.) The falsehood respecting death and the death-condition will fall with all that you so carefully built with this hay, wood and stubble of falsehood. The *fire* of that day shall test it and destroy it; and when it goes down you will go down with it, and will no longer have influence and preferment with the people. – Verse 18.

This falsehood has been at the bottom of the various errors which have confused you; and because you had wilfulness of heart and drew near me with lip-service, rather than a full consecration of heart, ye deluded and blinded yourselves (as teachers) as well as those whom you "rule," so that to all of you my Word has become as a sealed book – understood and

appreciated neither by the learned nor by the unlearned. (Isa. 29:10-12.) Hence the fall of both leaders and followers into the ditch of unbelief – infidelity. This calamity will pursue you continually until you come to "understand the report [doctrine, truth]." – Isa. 28:19.

Why so? Because the creed-beds you have made for yourselves are too short for men to *rest* upon. They would serve the purposes of infants in thought and reason; but as knowledge, growth, comes, the bed is found too short, too uncomfortable. The covering, too, is insufficient for the developed mind, tho sufficient for the infantile. No thinking person can wrap himself securely in the narrow hopes of any "orthodox" creed: if he gets under the covers of the Calvinistic creed-bed and endeavors to consider himself one of the elect, as therein taught, he is harassed by the chilling air of doubt, and cries: –

"'Tis a point I long to know,
Am I his or am I not."

If he removes to the trundle-bed creed of Arminianism, and seeks to cover himself with the hope that there is no election – that the door is open and that "whosoever will" surely includes himself, he cannot get warm because the chilly doubt comes to him again with the suggestion that the Scriptures certainly do mention a "little flock" and an "elect" class and a "narrow way." And he reasons that if God deliberately planned and prepared an eternity of torture for **[R2814 : page 165]** the vast majority of his creatures, he must be a loveless if not a conscienceless being – on whose mercy no reliance is to be placed. The larger he grows mentally the more uncomfortable the short beds and narrow creeds, until he resolves to get out of them in disgust. The difficulty is that it is not merely respecting human creeds that he loses faith; but believing that they represent God's Word, the thinker becomes a general skeptic, and viewing the Bible from

the outside only, and in the light of the traditions of the elders, he is deaf to every influence and appeal for the truth during the present age, and until in the new dispensation the voice of the Son of Man shall declare the truth with no uncertainty – when all the deaf and dead shall hear and, obeying, may have "life more abundant."

The theory, that the dead are not dead, is the basis for the false doctrines of Hell and Purgatory, and these monstrous absurdities are the rocks upon which the entire system of Babylon is being wrecked; and only those who learn *in time* that these are unscriptural, and who learn the true gospel as illustrated in the divine plan of the ages, will be able to stand the *shock* of skepticism, higher criticism, evolution theory, etc., now sweeping down upon churchianity.

Rev. Heber Newton, D.D., of New York City, a leading man in "Orthodoxy," more courageous than some of his associates, boldly states his agreement with death and *sheol*, over his own signature, as follows: –

"Death is the true resurrection. No other resurrection is conceivable.

"He who dies awakens into consciousness the same being as of old.

"The threads of the old existence are not cut at the touch of death.

"Death ushers us into no foreign world. All that is essential to human life here will be found there."

REVIEWS OF THE BOOKS MENTIONED.

The fact that the first named is gotten out by the higher critics, tells in a word of its antagonism to the Bible as

a *divine* revelation, and it will probably circulate chiefly among theologians already well saturated with doubts, and too conservative to circulate such books among their people to arouse doubts and questions they could never hope to answer. But the other two books are of a different caste – intended for the people, and likely to be well advertised, and "pushed" upon public attention by their publishers, and will work havoc among those resting their faith upon sects and creeds. We must notice these, to guard our readers against them. Remember, however, that we do not expect to be able to help any to "stand" except "the very elect," and them not so much by outward as by inward evidences of the Bible's divine authorship. Remember that it is our understanding, as outlined in these pages for the past twenty-two years, that Babylon's sudden fall, as a great millstone, is to result from such influences.

Dr. Abbott's work is styled, *The Life and Literature of the Ancient Hebrews*; and we have come across what we consider an excellent and very moderate review of it in *The North American*, from which we make extracts, which we believe will interest our readers, as follows: –

BOOK SHOULD HAVE GREAT INFLUENCE.

"Coming at this particular point of human mental history, when so many of us are religiously unsettled, unwilling either to accept materialism, or to believe what never can be proved, the book may be expected to exercise no little influence upon our decision....If Dr. Abbott's book be the last and authoritative word of the Higher Criticism, then its opponents at least know where they stand, and where issue should be joined.

"The present reviewer is bound to mention his profound dissent from the position which Dr. Abbott has taken. If what the reverend essayist pronounces to be the final truth about religion be so indeed, then it seems to me that religion is not worth

attending to. We have practically not advanced beyond the religious state of the ancient Egyptians, or of classic paganism. Religion is morality softened a little by an illogical suspension of judgment regarding some so-called religious mysteries. Dr. Abbott does not state his opinion in these words; but after examining his argument I cannot see what else to make of it. He does not believe that the Bible is the inspired Word of God; he does not believe that Christ is God made flesh.

NO SUBLIME PASSION IN IT.

"What he does believe on these points is common-sensible, plausible and ingeniously argued; but it is poignantly disappointing to those who look for the glow of supersensual faith; there is in it no lift, no sky, no sublime passion. I do not see how such a creed can hold and combine men; how it can do anything but loose and disperse them. It makes no demand upon us, except to be amiable and keep the commandments. It makes the straight and narrow path only too smooth and facile. It engenders no misgivings as to the competence of human intellect to solve all important religious problems. It ventures to call Herbert Spencer's Unknown Energy at the background of phenomena by the name of Deity; but it supplies us with no adequate reason for loving him, or for a conviction that he, in any comprehensible, vital way, loves us. It denies that he has ever vouchsafed us any first-hand, incontestable revelation of himself.

"According to Dr. Abbott, he (God) always permits himself to be colored, modified, and arranged, as it were, according to the limitations and bias of his human prophets; and we have nothing for it but their own personal persuasion that they were not woefully deceived in their assumed function. In **[R2815 : page 166]** short, the Bible is a remarkable and superior kind of literature; and God is an august and lovely possibility. Christ is,

or was, a man in whom the divine Spirit was powerfully and perhaps uniquely manifested. But nothing has really happened in religious history which could not be paralleled in kind, if not in degree, with what happens in the experience of any one of us. And yet Dr. Abbott states everything so softly and sweetly that we hardly feel, at the time we read him, that he is depriving us of religious essentials. It is only when we think him over afterwards that we perceive that we have nothing but husks to eat, and that the immortal springs have run dry.

HERE IS THE KEYNOTE OF IT.

"The keynote of his attitude is in a chance sentence in the preface: 'What will the New Criticism do with the Bible?' Why shall we not rather ask, What will the Bible do with the New Criticism? As a matter of fact, it turns out that the New Criticism does not and cannot touch the Bible, in its Divine essence, at all. It is occupied entirely with a minute and learned examination of the outside or shell of the Bible – with its letter, as we say. It makes certain discoveries, or arrives at certain theories, with regard to this letter; and then proceeds to judge of the Word of God upon the basis of these external discoveries and deductions.

"The conclusion reached is that the Bible is not divinely – that is, directly – inspired; is not the authentic and eternal Word of God; and, since no other book claims to be that, it follows that there is no such thing extant as a full divine revelation. Now, obviously, God can never be found out by man, working with his finite human faculties; if he do not reveal himself, he will never be revealed, and must always remain a mere surmise or plausible deduction from facts which man is capable of discerning. There is nothing – absolutely nothing – divinely authoritative upon which we can take our stand.

AUTHORSHIP OF THE BIBLE DISCUSSED.

"The Bible is nothing more than an adventitious collocation of writings, composed by Hebrews of salient intellectual, moral and emotional gifts, who lived some thousands of years ago. We are to take it for what it seems to us to be worth, and for nothing more. It is full of errors, chronological, geographical, scientific; it is full of fairy tales, lyrics, imaginative stuff of all kinds, which, however, possess the common peculiarity that they do contain constant references to the Hebrew Jehovah. If there do not live among us today poets, story-writers and 'prophets' just as remarkable as these old Hebrew ones, that is only because it happens so; and on the other hand, our historians and scientific writers are far more trustworthy.

"As regards the prophets, we are to understand that they were not prophets in the sense that they foretold things to come; if Isaiah or somebody else used a form of words which might be regarded as a foretelling of the coming of Christ, that is a mere coincidence, nothing of the kind was in the prophet's thoughts. Upon the whole, were a number of devout, pure-minded, highly gifted men to get together today, they might turn out a very respectable Bible of their own, entitled to just as much respect as this ancient volume or library, which has been so painfully handed down to us from antiquity.

"I say, they might; no doubt, on the other hand, they might not; but at any rate, there is no apparent reason in the nature of things why they should not.

WONDERS AT DR. ABBOTT'S CONCLUSIONS.

"Now, I do not suppose there are many to question that the Bible has all the imperfections that Dr. Abbott finds in it. But many must be at a loss to discover why, admitting the imperfections, and conceding that the Bible is nothing else at

most than an attempt to show that God is reckoned with in human history, Dr. Abbott should regard the Bible as in any sense a divine book.

"If the Bible be not something infinitely deeper and more vital to mankind than this, it is practically nothing; and that it should have survived all these years, and have so powerfully influenced mankind, is extraordinary, to say the best of it. It leaves us destitute of any certain knowledge of God, and entirely free to deny that any Supreme Being exists.

"In truth, unless we are prepared to make assumptions, at the outset, far outstripping any possible conclusions or discoveries of human knowledge or science, we cannot hope to have any God or Bible whatever. If we are to credit a divine Providence at all, we must credit it without any reservations whatever.

"If I could prove my belief in God by any process of logical demonstration, I should cease to believe in him. It is a certainty miraculously implanted in the soul, or it is nothing.

"I believe that the Bible is the inspired Word of God. I do so in virtue of reading the Bible, and being convinced by a spiritual and mystical process that it is the divine revelation. I then perceive that the trivial and often revolting historical details of a depraved and infidel people which it recounts; the songs which it sings, the apostrophes which it records, the allegories, the stories which it narrates, have not, in their literal significance, any divine or external meaning whatever.

"But all these are a mask, cover or body, under or within which is a soul or spirit, answering part to part to its material envelope or instrument, and conveying the spiritual truths concerning the Creator and the human being which he has

created, which are essential to that creature's integrity and salvation.

"Though its compilation seems to have been governed by chance, it was not so, but it was divinely ordained from the beginning. And whether or not the writers thought they were inspired, every word which they set down had already existed in the divine mind, and their hands were divinely guided so to write it and not otherwise.

"The true alternatives between which we must make our choice are the view stated by Dr. Abbott, which gives up religion; and this, which demands the surrender of the judgment of the human senses. His book may precipitate this choice, and thus do a good beyond what he had himself foreseen."

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JUDGE WAITE'S CRITICISM OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

This book is ably reviewed by the New York *Tribune*, from which we give the following extracts:

"Of the numerous gospels in use in the church in the second century, the author says that only three were probably apostolic, namely, the gospel of St. Paul, the Gospel or Recollections of Peter, and the Oracles or Sayings of Christ, attributed to Matthew. These, as well as numerous other sacred writings now unknown, were reserved as sacred scriptures in the early church, until they were suppressed in the interest of the present four gospels. 'I found myself,' says Theodoret (A.D. 430), 'upward of two hundred such books held in honor among your churches, and, collecting them all together, I had them put aside and instead introduced the gospels of the four Evangelists.' Many of the early Fathers refer plainly to these suppressed writings, and some of these references indicate that writings now unknown to

the church were regarded as authoritative. The three writings mentioned above probably did not teach the miraculous conception of Jesus or his physical resurrection. But it is the contention of the author that these and other beliefs gradually grew into shape in the church, and that then the present gospels were written, many of the materials in the older writings being used, the Gospel of Paul was thus the germ of the Gospel of Luke; the Gospel of Peter of the Gospel of Mark, and the Oracles of the Gospel of Matthew.

"Holding thus as to their origin, the author naturally rejects the gospels as unhistorical. Undoubtedly, he says, there was a moral and religious teacher that came to be known as Christ. This teacher, who had devoted followers and disciples, was put to death in the reign of Tiberius, and after his death Paul, the chief of his disciples, founded a new religion on his doctrines and precepts and on the belief in his resurrection. Both Peter and Paul, in the opinion of the author, were responsible for much of the cruelty, bigotry and fanaticism which came later to characterize Christianity. The apostolic fathers emphasized most the supernatural elements in Christianity, and in a credulous age new supernatural additions could easily be made without exciting any protest."

THE FOUNDATION OF GOD STANDETH SURE.

Replying to the Judge's arguments, we notice first, that their weight depends greatly upon the attitude of the mind receiving them. If we will imagine a mind (and they are legion) already disgusted with the din of the jarring and contradictory creeds of Christendom's sects, numbering more than a hundred; and if, additionally, we will imagine that mind awakened, in part at least, to a realization of the injustice, unmercifulness, lovelessness, pitilessness, heartlessness, of the doctrine of eternal torment of all except a "little flock" of "saved" ones; and

if we will remember that this awakened and disgusted mind has from infancy been taught that the Bible is the foundation for that slander upon the divine Creator, then we can easily see that to such a mind the weight of Judge Waite's book would be immense. Such an one is prepared and waiting for an excuse for utterly repudiating the Bible, and getting rid once and forever of harassing fears respecting the future of himself and millions of others, which as a nightmare had haunted his soul since infancy.

To the mind thus prepared and fertilized with the rich compost of the errors of centuries, including the "dark ages," every argument of this book will doubtless [R2816 : page 167] bring conviction and seem utterly unanswerable. The seeds of doubt, once sprouted, will make reverence give place to contempt, and every item that is obscure is classed as an inconsistency and contradiction, and speedily faith's anchorage is wholly lost. And in the case of the majority there is no real *faith*, but merely credulity, which vanishes still more rapidly.

But, on the other hand, note the position of those who approach these questions and suggestions of doubt from the opposite standpoint; – like those mentioned by the Prophet, saying, "The people that do *know* their God shall be strong and succeed." Suppose this one to have "tasted that the Lord is gracious," in realizing the forgiveness of his sins, and that being thus justified he has made a full consecration of himself to the Lord – even unto death; and that thus he was begotten of the holy spirit and realized the new life begun in his heart, and making progress in all the fruits of the spirit; – one in whom old things had passed away and all things become new.

Suppose, additionally, that this one was living today, and consequently privileged to partake of the "meat in due season" provided for those of the household of faith who are Israelites

indeed, and in a proper attitude of heart to receive it. Suppose that he had been a faithful student in the School of Christ and learned of him, being "taught of God." Suppose that now he saw clearly the divine plan of the ages; – the fall of our first parents, the promises through the patriarchs and the prophets of a great Redeemer out of Israel, who, dying, should thus redeem or purchase all men, not from torment, but from death, and who, since his resurrection, has waited with the work of restitution (resurrection) for the world until, as appointed by the Father, he shall have first selected his "elect" Church, his Bride and joint-heir in the Kingdom, which is to bless and restore all the willing of the purchased race.

Suppose this one, who has *seen* with the eyes of his understanding, the Wisdom, Justice, Love and Power of God portrayed in God's Word in respect to the divine plan, as it shall ultimately shine forth as the sun, – would it be easy to convince such an one [R2816 : page 168] that he had followed cunningly devised fables? Nay, verily; he would say with one of old, "I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him." – 2 Tim. 1:12.

Ask such an one what he thinks of the fact that the New Testament was not handed down from heaven in book form, but grew, as one after another added his testimony, and he would answer, Why yes! How else could it come to us and yet have us "walk by faith and not by sight"? Inquire what he thinks of the fact cited above, that Theodoret declared that in the churches of one province he found over a hundred different manuscripts, by various authors, dealing with the events of our Lord's ministry; and that he, Theodoret, persuaded them to accept as authoritative the four gospels we now use, – relegating the remainder to less prominence, as unauthoritative. Ask if this would shake his faith in the narratives of the four gospels, accepted now as well as then?

His answer would be, No; this does not shake my faith. I know very well that none of the Gospels were written until after Pentecost; and that later on there were numerous presentations of the matter by more and less competent writers. I know that of the four accounts so long canonically recognized by the Lord's people two (Mark and Luke) make no claim to having been written by apostles. I can well surmise that all accounts in that day of scarcity of books would be costly, as to time of preparation; and on this account, as well because of their sacred theme, all such would be kept in more or less honor, by the Lord's people. I can readily see the wisdom of deciding which of these versions were the more accurate in detail and desirable in style of diction: and I agree that a council of believers would be a desirable way of reaching a conclusion on this subject that would be beneficial to all. And I fully endorse the selection made, and conclude that in this, as in all of his people's affairs, our Lord supervised. Furthermore I am the more convinced of the honesty of the records, as well as of those who decided upon them, by the fact that two of them do not claim to have been made by eye witnesses, nor by apostolic writing, but were by St. Paul's contemporaries and assistants; and one of those says most modestly: –

"Forasmuch as *many* have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us [primitive Christians], even as they [apostles, etc.] delivered them unto us – [they] who from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the Word; it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of these things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus." – Luke 1:1-3.

Could there be anything less like deception than this? Would it not have been easy for dishonest men to have omitted the introductory words of Luke's Gospel, and to have given it the

name of James, or Paul, or Andrew, or Peter, or Nathaniel? And could they not have done similarly with the Gospel by Mark? Moreover it is evident from the above words of Theodoret, as well as from other records, that the general recognition of the four Gospels we now recognize took place long before Theodoret's writings. He mentions the matter in a manner that implies that the province thus instructed and advised was an exception to the rule – different from the churches of other provinces. And this, and the evidences against the rejected ("apocryphal") books, and the evidences in favor of the four Gospels we still recognize, were so weighty with the churches that Theodoret evidently had no difficulty in convincing them of the propriety of the course he advised.

No secret has been made of the fact that certain records respecting that time were rejected, and some Bibles, especially old Family Bibles, contained numerous of those rejected books, separated from the accepted ones, and styled as a whole The Apocrypha. And we have no hesitation in saying that the difference between these rejected records and those accepted and kept are so great that not one of our readers would be unable to quickly detect the wide differences between the style and general presentations of these and the simple, grand, unostentatious presentations of our four Gospels.

But, some one may ask, If these Gospels were not *selected* in the apostle's day, but long afterward, how do we know that they were inspired? We answer, that in the apostles' days most of the evangelizing was done by word of mouth, few people knew how to read, even if they had books; and the Lord evidently did not intend to fix matters so that there should be no room for doubts and doubters, and no room for exercise of faith in his supervision of his own cause. He undoubtedly did supervise the matter, so that we have in the four Gospels a very full record of the facts. Nor are we to think that inspiration is

requisite to the telling of the truth; and these Gospels make no claim to having been inspired or needing inspiration; – they are histories. We read Macaulay's history of England and believe its records without thinking of asking whether Macaulay was inspired to write it. We trust it even tho we have no reason to assume that God supervised its statements, as we have good reason to expect he did with the Gospel records.

As for the Epistles, their case is different, – they are not merely historical records; they are doctrinal [R2816 : page 169] treatises; respecting the authority, the inspiration, of their writers we have good reason to inquire. And whoever will examine the rejected or Apocryphal epistles will find that they are wholly inferior to those retained, and in addition, that no apostolic epistle was rejected and no unapostolic epistle retained. The conclusion of the early Church was the same that ours now would be. (1) That Paul was the Apostle chosen of God to fill Judas' place (the uninspired and undirected action of the eleven in choosing Matthias, previous to Pentecost, being entirely ignored by the Lord). (2) That all of the apostles were specially selected and specially inspired and directed of the Lord for the work given them to do; and that they have no successors in office and authority; – even tho Papacy has since claimed, to the contrary, the same inspiration and authority for its popes. The last book of the Bible sets its seal to the thought that the twelve were special representatives of God, and that the number could not be added to, – by showing the glorified Church of the future, under the symbol of a city – whose *twelve* foundations had in them written the names of the *twelve* apostles of the Lamb.

It is objected further, that some of the books now recognized as parts of the New Testament were regarded with suspicion by some of the churches for quite a while, and openly rejected by some for a season; – among others the Second Epistle of Peter, and Revelation. We answer, that this is not surprising; and so far

from being an unfavorable item it is favorable; – showing clearly that whatever indifference might have been manifest in some congregations at first, some were very critical, very exacting as to the proofs of genuineness of what they received. And as for the Book of Revelation, it belonged less to that day, anyway. It is specially ours of to-day, and contains abundant internal evidence of its one-ness with the remainder of God's Book.

However, as at first stated, all these things, while clear as crystal to those possessed of and taught by God's spirit, are obscure to all others who will find abundant opportunity for "stumbling at the Word, being *disobedient*." It is still as true as when our Master [R2817 : page 169] said it, that – "If any man will do my Father's will, he shall *know* of my doctrine." Whoever will not *do* this, whatever else that is good he may do, will not know, – not being of the kind "to whom it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom." (Matt. 13:11.) To all others the matter may be foggy, at best; even as the Prophet declared, "None of the wicked [unfaithful to their covenant] shall understand." The Scriptures are for and addressed to the Church – the saints and the household of faith; and their evidences are internal, not external; just as the symbolic vessels and furniture, etc., of the Tabernacle and of the Temple were completely hidden from outsiders, and could be fully seen only by the typical priesthood, in the light of the typical oil and lamp.

Does some one ask, What can we do for friends whom we may expect more and more to see drifting off into skepticism? Must we let them go without endeavoring to help them?

We answer, No; we should do all we can for each one, even tho we know that it will avail nothing for the vast majority. Give them the following treatment, asking divine wisdom to know how to approach them wisely. (1) Let them read this paper, and (2) loan them MILLENNIAL DAWN, VOL. I., the first four

chapters of which were specially written for the assistance of truth-seekers, who need first of all to have faith established in the Bible as a *whole*. If they are in the proper condition of heart, that is to say, if they have the "hearing ear," they will get a start at least in that volume, which perhaps has converted more infidels than any other book in print today. If they love the truth and appreciate the divine character as set forth in the *Plan of the Ages*, they will want to go on and on in the green pastures of truth, and by the still waters they will be refreshed, and doubtless the great Shepherd will by his rod and staff guide them to the Kingdom. But the record is that a thousand to one shall fall. – Psa. 91:7.

WHENCE THE PRESENT GENERAL BLINDNESS?

Prevalent blindness and loss of faith in the Bible are attributable to the various so-called Orthodox creeds of Christendom; formed during the "dark ages," these are full of superstitions and falsehoods, and vain attempts to reconcile these with the holy Scriptures. Now that reason is awakened it does not occur to the devoted sectarian that the fault is wholly with his creed, and that it really is in violent conflict with God's Word as reverently and reasonably interpreted. On the contrary, he loses faith in his Bible in proportion as he loses faith in his creed; because he considers them to be in harmony – identical in their teachings.

He has a reverence for his Bible as an antique, as a remembrancer of the past, – intimately associated with his earliest experience at a pious parent's knee; and he has a similar reverence for the creed and denomination to which his parents and himself have long been attached. But he has lost *faith* in both. He can see at a glance the inconsistency of the teachings of the various creeds, that God is either *incapable* of extending the knowledge of Christ to all mankind, and giving all a fair

opportunity for believing and obeying the gospel, or else that he is *unwilling* to do [R2817 : page 170] so to any but an *elect few*; and that the vast remainder are to be tormented to all eternity; – which, if God knew the end from the beginning, implies that he provided them with eternal life with the foreknowledge and intention that they should thus suffer.

Men could stifle reason in this manner once, but they can do so no longer. It is to their credit as reasoners, and to their credit as men and women of heart and sympathy, that they reject such theories as impossible of belief, and declare that such testimony bears on its face the evidence that it is untrue; that it is a blasphemy against the true God and a dishonor to the conscience and reasoning powers of every one who so professes; and that they had rather trust to a theory of their own construction, built on love and reason, than stultify themselves longer by such professions.

And not seeing that their creeds malign the Bible as much as they do the Creator, they reverently lay aside Bible and catechism as relics of their thought-infancy. Nominally they still adhere to their denomination as being "as good as any, and as correct as any;" and the denomination still adheres, nominally, to the creed and the Bible and the accustomed forms and ceremonies: believing them to have a salutary effect upon the young and a restraining influence upon the immorally inclined.

However it may be kept secret, the "broad-minded" and "intelligent," "up-to-date" ministers and members of the various denominations have taken, or are rapidly taking, the view advanced by Dr. Abbott, set forth foregoing: that *morality*, and not *faith* in Christ, is the divine test. The tendency of many is to universalism; but the majority, having lost faith in the Bible, have no guide whatever except their own or other men's reasons, and are full of doubts. They have lost their anchor and are being

driven to shipwreck on the rocks of infidelity by the increasing winds of reason.

These all need help; but there are none who can render aid except such as by the grace of God have gotten their own eyes open to see that the Bible has been unintentionally traduced in the house of its friends – that it is loyal to God, and most beautifully grand and self-consistent to the sanctified reason, and able to stand the test today and to come off victor, as much as in the past; while, on the contrary, the sectarian creeds can find no defenders among reasonable men.

The bolder infidels tell us that the Bible was made up by priests and knaves. We inquire, which priests and knaves? – of which denomination?

Was it made by Methodist priests and knaves?

If so, why did they not add a dozen or so more texts to support their special tenet – that divine grace is free during this Gospel age? And why did they not omit those texts which mention "election" and the "elect"?

Was it the Presbyterians who made the Bible?

If so, why did they not add more texts on election, and omit the three or four which appear to be contrary to the doctrine of election, and which they cannot explain away?

Was it Lutheran priests, Episcopal priests, or Baptists? No! for similar reasons.

Oh! Finally they conclude that it must have been made by the priests and knaves of the church of Rome! Well, let us see whether its internal evidences favor that view. What object did they serve by such a fraud?

If the Roman Catholics made the New Testament, and pretended that they gave the words of Jesus and the apostles, so as to furnish a foundation for their teachings, how comes it that they are and have long been the bitter foes of the Bible – Bible readings, Bible Societies, etc? And how comes it that they did not make a Bible which would support their theories? Why did they not put into it clear statements to the effect that Peter was the first pope; that our Lord's mother was the "Mother of God," and that she should be prayed to; that saints are to be prayed to; that images, crucifixes and pictures are to be adored? Why did they omit mention of "holy water," "holy candles," "extreme unction," consecrated cemeteries, and the invalidity of any but priestly marriages? Why did they not insert commands respecting the wearing of "scalpels," the necessity of masses for the dead, to get them out of purgatory? Why did they not insert instructions to all to apply to the priests for indulgences, and fix liberal prices at which they should be supplied? Why was Purgatory left unmentioned when it is the mainstay of their church treasury? Why did they not throw in at least a dozen or so texts amongst the epistles of Paul, Peter, James and John describing hell and purgatory in vivid colors, instead of omitting a single mention of either? Why did they not insert a dozen texts or so on the doctrine of Trinity, instead of leaving the entire Bible without such a text, until the seventh century, when *one* text was corrupted, so as to indirectly imply something of the kind? (1 John 5:7 – admitted by all trinitarians to be corrupted, and omitted from the Revised Version). Why did they not insert a passage to show that the "*clergy*" are separate and distinct from the "*laity*"?

Why, on the contrary, did they insert passages which say that there is no such class distinction as "clergy" or "laity" in God's Church, but that – "Ye are all one in Christ Jesus"? Why did they permit [R2817 : page 171] that their favorite, the Apostle Peter, should be made to contradict their theory and

practice, by saying, not of the "clergy," but of the whole Church, "Ye are a royal priesthood"? (1 Pet. 2:9.) Why did they permit the oft repeated statements that the *end* of the wicked would be "destruction" – "second death," etc., which would be wholly contradictory to their theory of "*eternal torment*"?

We answer, that the evidence is conclusive that the Bible was not made by any of the sects, and is in antagonism to them all, and that in justice it should be judged by itself – by its own internal evidences. And all who have seen its beauty from this standpoint, praise God for the light: – for his wonderful plan of the ages, of which the ransom at Calvary, *once for all*, is the center, the election of the Gospel Church a grand incidental, and the blessings of the Millennial age, bringing opportunities for obedience unto eternal life to all the redeemed, is the grand outcome.

Whoever knows this gospel and does not desire and endeavor to spread it to others about him who are blind to it, but hungry for it, surely lacks the spirit of Christ, whatever may be his profession. How dwelleth the love of God in him?
