

VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER.

HERMOGENES TO TITUS.

PERHAPS the best article which has yet appeared in the religious press bearing upon the higher criticism, came out in the last number of *The Wesleyan Christian Advocate* over the title of "The Epistle of Hermogenes to Titus," written in archaic style, belonging to the apostolic days and purporting to explain many passages of Scriptures which have furnished the bones of contention in recent controversies. Every Bible student will enjoy reading it. In part, the article reads as follows:

"Hermogenes, a servant of God, and a minister of Christ, and a teacher of the true faith of the Gospel, according to the ripe judgment of the present age; to Titus, mine own brother, whom I greatly love in the truth: Grace, mercy and peace unto thee.

"Thou hast heard, beloved, of our aged brother Paul, that he hath written epistles to Timotheus; and I hear, also to thee; in the which he hath set forth many things in exhortations unto each one of you. In some of these he hath sought to hinder my usefulness with thee, and with many others. Remember, brother, that he is old and hath divers infirmities, and hath little knowledge of sound philosophy which edifieth. Therefore, I bear no malice toward him. But I write to set in order for thine instruction a more reasonable Gospel, which will make thee wise and will enable thee to instruct others also.

"Thou hast heard how our brother Demas hath written Timotheus, to teach him how he may gain favor with them that be somewhat in authority above us; and, moreover, with high esteem among them that will not endure the hard doctrines declared by Paul in his preaching and epistles. I know thee, thy promise and great talent, and earnestly desire that thou mayest rise above this Timotheus. Thou hast gifts many, and

I would that thou mightest be a bishop over the Church. Give heed, therefore, to my counsel.

"This Paul hath a lively imagination, such as maketh him exceedingly superstitious concerning the Scriptures, and an unsafe guide for such as would be wise; whilst I am yet young and have had long training in the schools of men skilled in reasoning concerning divine things, being in their company no less than sixty and seven days. Those great men instructed me fully in the approved laws, by the which we may know of the things which cannot be taken; wherefore, I think myself able to lead thee in a broad way. I will now set in order unto thee that which I have learned.

"The fathers did teach that Moses hath written how God made the heaven and the earth, having been instructed in this of God. Know thou, therefore, that Moses did beguile them. He obtained many accounts of a tradition of creation among several ancient peoples, and did patch them together for the Hebrews. That Paul accepteth this book of Moses as true history, doth show him to lack sound judgment.

"Thou knowest also that it hath been taught that the law and the prophets were given by inspiration of God. Herein is grievous error. The priests of the people of Israel, greatly desiring to lead our fathers into righteousness and to make of them a great nation, devised those great books. It is true, I cannot make known unto thee by which way this is proved; but beware of questioning my knowledge in this thing; thou wilt show thyself ignorant shouldest thou at all call in question our judgment. None but the instructed can fully understand these matters. The simple and unlearned must needs believe what we teach. If they fail to hearken, they are blind and cannot see into the deep things of our wisdom.

"We now conclude that at the least one thousand scribes were required to devise the law and the prophets; and peradventure, if that number doth not appear sufficient we can enlarge it to be even five thousand. It was a great work of imagination, and God must needs have

many men to imagine each a little. Moreover, in these books the wise find many things contrary to sound reason. I will inform thee concerning some of them, in order that thou mayest be able to explain them to thy people. The writing [R2963 : page 68] which beareth the name of Moses doth declare that God did feed our fathers in the wilderness with manna from heaven. It is most confidently taught among us who are wise that they did lick with their tongues a honey, which is found on the leaves of the trees in the wilderness, and named it manna. The rock which gave forth water when this Moses did strike it flowed from a deep well, which he and his servants bored through a great rock by night while the people slept. The great pillar of cloud by day and fire by night which followed the people was produced by cunningly mixed powders. Moreover, this Moses was a wise magician, and did charm these people into a deep sleep, and while they slept, with his chosen helpers, he prepared many vessels into which, when full of water, they did cast a fine powder. After this they soaked the garments of all the people in the vessels of water, and it was so that they could no more wear out. Give heed concerning what we declare to be the truth of the record of the walls of Jericho, how they fell. They that be searchers after truth set forth that the horns and trumpets which the men of Israel did blow mightily made a great commotion in the air, insomuch that the walls began to tremble greatly, which continuing many days they were shaken down and did fall. Know thou also that Joshua did, by cunning magic, cause the ignorant people to imagine that the sun obeyed him to stand still. They were deceived, for their own good, that it might profit them withal. Joshua did cause their memory to stand still. But we are wiser than to teach men that reason that this record is more than a fable.

"I will instruct thee, moreover, concerning the book which beareth the name of Esaias. The learned now show unto us that many men did bear that name, and every one a little part hath written; how many it doth not yet appear. When the searching in the matter hath ended, it may be shown that peradventure a score of scribes had part in making the book as it now is. We are now assured that Esaias prophesied

nothing concerning the sufferings and glory of Christ. He spake only of the sufferings of all Israel for the sins of King Ahaz. (Why Israel should be called to suffer because of wicked Ahaz's sins, or why Esaias did write of this, it doth not concern us.) The book speaketh nothing of Jesus Christ. This we say, and if any teach otherwise, he is thereby shown to be in ignorant company, with Paul and Peter and John, who have fallen into error, and teach old wives' fables, which the instructed reject.

"We have, also, a deep knowledge of the truth of Daniel and his prophecy, which will greatly edify thee, and will satisfy those who doubt concerning the miracles. Daniel was a man acquainted with many strange secrets. He knew how to charm the lions that they should not devour him when he should be cast into their den. So he feared not to pray; and when he was thrown to the lions, he cast a spell over them, that they could not bite or hurt him. Thou seest he saved himself, and gave God the praise. The record of the three Hebrew children and their trial in the fiery furnace hath also been shown to be according to reason. It hath been made known unto us by the teachers of science at whom Paul doth only sneer, that at the center of the hottest fire there doth always remain a cool place which will neither burn nor scorch garments, nor flesh. These Hebrew children were aforetime instructed regarding this; and therefore they feared not the wrath or power of the king; and when cast into the fire they knew immediately the place of safety and so were protected. See how reason doth make clear things hard to be believed, brother....

"Finally, I declare unto thee the true explanation of the record of Jonah. He fled before the Lord that he might not perish at Nineveh. He had not sought that appointment and rebelled against going. When he took ship, the Lord ordered a vessel bearing the name "Great Fish" to follow Jonah's ship. So when the sailors did throw Jonah overboard he was picked up by the crew of the "Great Fish" and tarried with them three days. These earnestly persuaded him to accept his appointment,

and had such weight with him that he consented, and so went to Nineveh.

"Thou seest, brother, how our views do appeal to reason and sound judgment. I am assured that thou wilt gladly accept them, and assist us in spreading them, especially since Paul hath proven himself unable to lead the thinking classes of this great age. Thou mayest now be a leader in our school and get unto thyself a great name, for much learning, if thou dost act with us in this great warfare of the wise against the dull and ignorant. Paul hath had the help of Peter, John, James and Jude in this contention against us, but we faint not and continue to teach the people everywhere this doctrine, which maketh faith an easy matter. Meditate on these things I have written, and thy profiting will appear to all. When thou hast fully understood this, I will instruct thee in the correct knowledge of the gospel of Jesus Christ in another epistle. The salutation of me, Hermogenes, by mine own hand. Farewell."

PROGRESS IN CHURCH FEDERATION ABROAD AND AT HOME.

English Journals are noting and commenting upon the unusual conduct of the Rev. R. C. Fillingham of the Episcopal Church. He has recently been exchanging pulpits with Baptist and Congregational ministers. This is contrary, not only to usage, but **[R2964 : page 68]** to Episcopal law on the subject, and the query is respecting what action may be taken by the Episcopal authorities, – whether his course will be ignored, and thus indirectly sanctioned as being in the interest of Christian unity and fellowship, or whether he will be reproved, or dismissed, and thus the separating fence be kept intact. In his sermon in the Carleton Hill Baptist Church, Mr. Fillingham is reported by the English Journals, as follows: –

"Mr. Fillingham took his text from Revelation, 5th chapter, and part of the 10th verse: 'And hast made us unto our God kings and priests.' There had always, he said, been an ugly sound about priestcraft; it was a word of evil associations. It was connected with

persecution and with human misery. If a number of men got hold of the idea that they alone had the truth, it was not unlikely but that they would persecute. But, again, it was an unwarrantable attempt to rule over the consciences of men. Every little curate, who had but just scraped through his theological college, claimed to have the [R2964 : page 69] keys of heaven and hell in his waistcoat pocket, whereas a Spurgeon and a Clifford were to be outside altogether.

"After dwelling on these points, Mr. Fillingham declared such claims to be contemptible as well as dangerous. The truth was their Orders were no better than those of the Nonconformists. Their claims were preposterous. The first Archbishop of the Church of England was Archbishop Parker, and he was consecrated by Barlow. But all the evidence went to show that Barlow himself was never a bishop at all. He was appointed in 1536 to the bishopric of St. Asaph, and then to St. David's. But there was only one consecration of Bishops in that year – namely, on June 11th, and Barlow's name did not appear among them. Still further, Cromwell, the Vicar-General, addressed him as Bishop-Elect. Henry VIII, therefore, apparently made Barlow a Bishop by his mere word. Therefore, even from a sacramentarian point of view, Ritualism was a mere imposture. Priestcraft must be fought, and one of the best ways of fighting it was a union of Protestants of all denominations."

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Church federation is progressing in Great Britain. All the large Nonconformist bodies – all denominations of Protestants outside of the Episcopal Church – have effected a general union or co-operative arrangement as respects mission work, etc. This is supposed to be the forerunner of a still closer federation of interests. Local federations of Protestant denominations have been formed in this country, and seven or eight State Federations, but, so far as we are informed, the movement has not yet attained a general or national scope. Evidently the complete federation, which surely is to come, is still a few years in advance of

us. The nearest approach to it, thus far, is represented in the "Second Annual Conference of the National Federation of Churches and Christian Workers," held in Washington City, February 4 and 5, in Y.M.C.A. Hall.

MADAME GUYON'S FULL SURRENDER TO THE LORD

Madame Jeanne De La Mothe Guyon was educated in convents, saved at the foot of the cross in 1668, sanctified in Notre Dame, witnessed for Jesus in the Court of Louis XIV., in France, Switzerland, and Italy, to bishops, priests, nuns and common people; was imprisoned for seven years, and died.

Of her conversion day she said: "I bade farewell forever to assemblies which I had visited, to plays and diversions, dancing, unprofitable walks and parties of pleasure. The pleasures and amusements so much prized and esteemed by the world now appeared to me dull and insipid – so much so that I wondered how I ever could have enjoyed them."

After making a full consecration she wrote: "I henceforth take Jesus Christ to be mine. I promise to receive him as a husband to me. And I give myself to him, unworthy though I am, to be his spouse. I ask of him, in this marriage of spirit, that I may be of the same mind with him – meek, pure, nothing in myself, and united in God's will. And, pledged as I am to be his, I accept, as a part of my marriage portion, the temptations and sorrows, the crosses and contempt which fell to him." Concerning her imprisonment, she wrote as follows: "I passed my time in great peace, content to spend the remainder of my life there, if such should be the will of God. I employed part of my time in writing religious songs. I and my maid, La Gautiere, who was with me in prison, committed them to heart as fast as I made them. Together we sang praises to Thee, O, our God! It sometimes seemed to me as if I were a little bird whom the Lord had placed in a cage, and that I had nothing to do now but to sing. The joy of my heart gave a brightness to the objects around me. The stones of my prison looked in my eyes like

rubies. I esteemed them more than all the gaudy brilliancies of a vain world. My heart was full of that joy which thou givest to them who love Thee in the midst of their greatest crosses."

