

VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER.

FALLING FROM THE FAITH.

NOT content with showing from the Scriptures that we are living in the "harvest" of this age, when the Lord as reaper will separate thoroughly between the genuine and the nominal, imitation "wheat," gathering all of the former into the Kingdom "garner," we have endeavored from time to time to point out the fulfilment of this all around us. As already indicated, this "falling" appropriately appears first among the teachers in Churchianity – the masses readily following their blind leaders into the ditch of unbelief.

One of the notable evidences of this growth of unbelief in God's Word and in the entire plan of salvation which it alone sets forth, is found in the following extracts clipped from a recent issue of *The Ram's Horn*. Not because the writer, Rev. R. F. Horton, D.D., of London, is higher in position than others who have taken the same stand (or rather have similarly lost their *standing* and fallen into unbelief); nor because *The Ram's Horn* is the only or even the leading religious paper to publish such open defiance to the Word, but because the journal was started as an opponent to infidelity – as a champion of the Bible and of faith in "the blood of the cross" as the only ground of forgiveness of sins – the only basis of the sinner's justification before God.

The matter is presented in the Question and Answer form, and is given the full indorsement of the journal. It follows: –

"Do you believe that man was evolved from the lower forms of life, or created as related in Genesis?"

"I believe that man was slowly evolved from lower forms, and that evolution is even now not complete; but I also believe he is being evolved into the likeness of the image of God. Men as individuals are

in all degrees of evolution. The image of God is what logicians used to call the final cause of man, the goal and purpose for which man began his adventurous career. The goal explains the means. Man is here with his face towards the goal, and the goal is the measure of the stature of Christ. Evolution cannot explain causes, cannot explain life itself, but must draw on a region of truth beyond itself to explain its own processes. ***"Do you believe in the fall as related in the Bible?"***

"Yes, exactly as related – as an allegory, a parable in order to explain the mystery of moral and spiritual evil, remembering that Adam is but the Hebrew word for man, and Eve the Hebrew word for life. The story is the pictorial presentation of that alienation from God which is the constant experience of human life, caused by disobedience. We disobey and know it, reach out our hands, and in strange inflation of our little godless minds we set up ourselves, and by self-exaltation are ruined because we have left our God. The fall is strangely illustrated by the writings of atheists."

The Ram's Horn's editor properly calls these "great questions" and their answers "clear cut and definite." We are glad to have the truth clearly and definitely presented, and when error is stated we prefer to have it ***definitely*** proclaimed also; there is less danger that it will deceive ordinary readers. We only wish that Rev. Horton had been still more explicit: some of the Lord's unsuspecting sheep will still be in danger of being deceived by these answers, and it shall be our duty and privilege to help them get clearer light upon the ***full meaning*** of the explanations.

The reply to the first question is ***clear cut*** in its denial of the Bible's account – that God ***created*** man in his own image; a very different thing from creating him either as a higher order of monkey or as a microbe, and expecting him to attain the divine image by his own efforts. Indeed, Dr. Horton totally ignores God's **[R3256 : page 388]** creative work in man when he speaks of "the goal and purpose for which ***man began his*** adventurous career." The Bible teaches that

it is God's purposes and not man's that are being worked out, and that God gave man his start – and a good start at that – in an Eden whose every condition was *fit* for the testing of one already in the divine image and *on trial* to determine his obedient loyalty to his Creator's commands: the reward of obedience being a continuation of the divine image and favor unto life everlasting, and that of disobedience the loss of that image and favor in death.

Dr. Horton declares that "the goal explains the *means*." By this his readers are to understand that the past six thousand years have marked such progress amongst men as to imply that the process, continued, will result in man's attainment of God's image. Evolution is the "*means*" this eminent D.D. credits for all the progress of the world – Evolution is the Savior he lauds for raising man from lower planes of existence; and still uplifting him will, he hopes, *ultimately* make him an image of God. He does not tell us if he has *any* hopes for those now dying and for those who have died for centuries past without attaining God's image. He leaves us to wonder whether he expects that such will never have God's image, or whether he believes that a process of Evolution continues beyond the tomb, and that *it* will ultimately "*save unto the uttermost*." If he carries Evolution into the heavenly conditions, would not consistency require him to claim that the angels are evolving? and that God himself is evolving? And if so, if God is not yet perfect, how can Dr. Horton or anyone else speak of man's becoming an image of a God who has not yet evolved into a definite, fixed character?

When considering that man is imperfect, and that his proper aim should be perfection, we are not to take Dr. Horton's Evolution theory as the only one that will explain the situation. God's Word, through his chosen mouthpieces – his Son, the apostles and the prophets – is more trustworthy than Dr. Horton. God's explanation of present conditions is that, "By one man's disobedience sin entered the world, and death by [as the result of] sin; and so [thus] death passed upon all men." (Rom. 5:12.) The Apostle explains the lesser degradation of some and

the greater depravity of others by saying that, while all sinned and fell, some indulged more wilfully and fell more deeply than others. When they knew God they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise they became fools,... wherefore God gave them up to uncleanness through lusts of their own hearts...who changed the truth of God into a lie....And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient, – being filled with all unrighteousness. – Rom. 1:21-29.

This is the Bible side of the question – not that monkeys set for themselves as a goal an imaginary image of God, and have gotten so far along toward it as is represented by present-day civilization, but that man in God's image was disobedient to his Creator's commands and sought out many inventions and degraded himself (Eccl. 7:29), and God has permitted him to set low standards and ideals before himself to his own ruin. The Bible accredits the high ideals which are doing so much to lift man out of degradation not to anything in monkeys or fallen men, but to God's revelations of his plan of salvation, which, however imperfectly understood, is "*the power* of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth," and indirectly a power for good upon the heathen as well as upon the people of civilized lands who *believe not*, in the proper and specific sense of that term. The promises of the Redeemer, and his work of redemption and restitution, lighted the hopes of natural Israel and lifted that nation above the other nations, which more or less caught its spirit of hope; and since the Redeemer's death and resurrection, and his outpouring of his spirit upon Spiritual Israel, his Church, a "little flock," has been the light of the world, which in a small degree has uplifted the civilized nations to a semi-decency which in many is but a thin veneer of "form of godliness."

The second answer deserves careful scrutiny, for it is an evasion instead of an answer. It is evident that the answer should not have been

Yes, but *No, I do not believe in the fall as related in the Bible.* Adherence to the theory of Evolution forces this man, and everyone else who reasons logically, to deny the plain Bible narrative – not only the Genesis account but also the New Testament records, and to falsely teach that Adam and Eve were myths, that they never existed, that the record is merely an allegory – a fable. What, then, did our Savior mean when he said that he "came to seek and to save that which was lost," and to "give himself a ransom for all"? (Matt. 18:11; 1 Tim. 2:6.) What did the Apostle Peter and all the holy prophets mean when they spoke of the "*restitution* of all things" if our race did not fall and need restitution? (Acts 3:19-21.) What did the Apostle Paul mean when he said, "*In Adam* all die," and "By *one man's* disobedience," and "As by *a man* came death," and "The *first man* was made a living soul"? If the Bible record respecting Adam is unreliable we have no record of a first man, and if unreliable in this matter it could not be depended on at all. If left without an Adam and a fall and a Paradise lost we should have no **[R3256 : page 389]** use for a restitution, and a Paradise restored, by a Redeemer. If no fall no sin, and no need of redemption.

Thank God for the good hope *set before us in the Gospel*, so different from the Evolution delusion. "This hope we have as an anchor to the soul, sure and steadfast," and reasonable and consistent and Scriptural in every particular. It acknowledges the fall, the need of the redemption accomplished by our Lord at Calvary, and the Church's need of full deliverance from sin and death in the First Resurrection, and the world's need of the great Millennial Kingdom for its restitutorial uplift opportunities for "the whole world."

Dr. Horton contradicts his first reply in his second. In the first he says, "Man is here with his face towards the goal," which implies that man is doing finely along **[R3257 : page 389]** Evolution lines; but he contradicts this in his second, saying, – "We [including himself] disobey and know it, reach out our hands and, in strange *inflation of our little godless minds*, we set up ourselves, and by self-exaltation are ruined because we have left our God." – Where, then, is the face

toward the goal and the Evolutionary power in man? Does not the gentleman's reasoning rather confirm the Apostle's words than his own? – See Rom. 1:21-29.

CHURCH COMMUNISM ARGUMENTS.

An exchange says: –

"We declare that the germs of divine communism were planted in the Church nineteen hundred years ago, and that in the harvest of the dispensation, divine communism must characterize the economics of those who awake to a realization of the genuine science of the Lord's coming. He who denies the principles of communism as it obtained in the early Church in obedience to the law of love to the neighbor, cannot consistently lay claim to acceptance of the apostolic doctrines and practices."

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We consider that the writer of the above item erred in saying that the *germs* of communism were planted nineteen centuries ago. Such of those germs as were proper for man were planted six thousand years ago, when God created man perfect, in his own image. The conditions resulting from the fall made communism impossible – injurious, and therefore unwise. The Lord's people, in proportion as they become heavenly minded, should be better prepared than others for a return to proper communism; but experience teaches what the Apostle Paul proclaimed, namely, that the treasure of the new heart, the new mind, can exercise itself only through our earthen vessels – all of which are more or less twisted and cracked, "so that we cannot *do* the things that we would."

It is far from the truth to claim that our Lord and his disciples dwelt together on communistic lines. On the contrary, the very terms of discipleship were that Jesus should be the acknowledged Lord and Master. To his disciples Jesus' word was law. They certainly did not

have a commission of *authority*. True, Judas was treasurer of the funds, not, however, by vote or general appointment, but by the Lord's permission; for the moneys contributed were given to Jesus (Luke 8:3) and not to the disciples. He voluntarily shared with them. Clearly, however, he personally cared for his mother, Mary; and evidently, too, his disciple John had separately a home and means of his own. – John 19:27.

After Pentecost, under the impulse of the new mind, the Lord's people evidently did attempt what every true Christian feels considerably drawn to, namely – a limited form of communism. But communism was not taught as proper Christian usage, and not one word can be found in the Bible inculcating it. It was purely a voluntary movement, which the apostles neither aided nor opposed, and which speedily proved itself impracticable under present conditions. The Lord permitted his people to experiment thus as a valuable lesson – teaching the need of the resurrection-change to transform their bodies.

When the lesson had been given the Lord permitted a fierce persecution to scatter the Jerusalem Church, and we hear nothing more of Christian communism in the Bible. Quite the contrary. The Apostle writes to "them that are rich among you," and took up collections for the poor, and exhorted each Christian to lay aside for benevolent purposes according as the Lord had prospered *him* – showing thus that neither the labor nor its monetary result were considered common property. The exhortation to "do good unto all men as we have opportunity, especially to the household of faith," and the exhortation that, seeing a brother have need, we should not content ourselves with giving him our good wishes but should share with him the gifts which we by God's grace enjoy; – these, and many other Scriptures we might cite, show clearly that communism was not practised and that the apostles did not improve such opportunities to inculcate or even commend communism. Doubtless many of God's blessings will be common to all men during the Millennium and after it; – yet this surely will be far from the anarchious kind of communism advocated by some

today. The Millennial Kingdom will be a monarchy – a theocracy. Similarly the heavenly Kingdom is not communistic in government, for grades are recognized – angels, principalities and powers, etc. And, as now, in the Church, the Apostle declares that God sets the members as it pleaseth him. So we find him [R3257 : page 390] teaching that after the First Resurrection shall have brought the entire body of Christ to perfection of the divine nature, there will still be no communism of authority, but there shall be least and greatest in the Kingdom, even as star differeth from star in glory.

HIGHER CRITICISM'S WIDE INFLUENCE.

A German scholar and editor of a religious journal says: –

"We are at the beginning of a new epoch in the life of the Church. The seventy-year war between mythology and theology in the domain of the Old Testament has seemingly ended in a complete defeat of the traditional views. The critical views practically control Protestant thought everywhere and have assumed international proportions. Not one university man in Germany holds to the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, and all make concessions to the newer views.

"And yet when a person coolly and deliberately looks at the so-called 'certain results' of the critical investigations of the last century and a half, what are these 'results'? Nothing else than the conclusion that most of the books of the Old Testament are literary frauds; that they do not correctly teach the historical development of the religion of Israel, and, to make matters worse, intentionally and purposely misrepresent this history, especially those books that have been 'revised' in harmony with the spirit of the Deuteronomist. The whole Mosaic code, in its real essence, at any rate, is held to be a later fabrication, and its claim to have been given in the wilderness is regarded as an historical falsehood. Its whole historical background, it is asserted, is a fabrication, and the Law is but the outcome of a struggle between the advocates of the local cults and the hierarchical tendencies of the Jerusalem priesthood.

"There is only one other religious book that, in its origin and development, can be compared with the Old Testament, as the critics regard it, and that is the Book of Mormon. A mere glance at this parallel must convince the earnest Christian that he can have no share in the radical criticism of the times. The strongest argument against the hypothesis is to state it in its simple and naked truthfulness."

"THE AWFUL PROBLEM OF FUTURE RETRIBUTION."

In the New York *Christian Advocate* Rev. G. Jackson treats a timely topic thus: –

"I close these brief notes on Methodist doctrine with a reference to the dark and awful problem of future retribution. In Dr. Dale's summary of the characteristic doctrines of the evangelical revival, 'those which its preachers were constantly reiterating, and on which they insisted most vehemently,' he names as the fourth and last, 'the eternal suffering to which they believed that those are destined who have heard the Christian Gospel in this life and rejected it.' He then goes on to point out in words which I could wish to transfer bodily to my own pages, the great change which the belief of large numbers of persons now belonging to evangelical Churches has undergone in relation to this subject. There are some – their number is probably small – who have accepted what is commonly known as the theory of universal restoration, who believe, that is, that all men will certainly at last reach the blessedness and glory of eternal union with God. Others again there are – and it is well known that Dale himself was one of them – whose study of the New Testament has led them to the conclusion that men possess immortality only in Christ, and that consequently those in this world who have rejected him are destined to *eternal destruction*, to a *second death* from which there is no resurrection. Others again can reach no definite and positive position; they find in the words of Christ and his apostles apparently conflicting teaching. Such, according to Dale, is the present position of the

doctrine in our evangelical churches. How far are his words true of Methodism? That we have been greatly influenced by the modification of belief it is impossible to deny, though how far the change has gone it is not easy to say. So far as I am able to judge, dogmatic universalism has no place among us at all. A few, perhaps, especially since the publication of Dr. Joseph Agar Beet's work on 'The Last Things,' have been looking toward '*conditional immortality*' for relief from the agonizing burden of the old belief. But the overwhelming majority of those to whom a restatement of their faith has become a necessity would probably prefer to class themselves amongst *those who can reach no definite and positive conclusion*. I am told on the highest authority that the late Dr. Moulton, who held an unrivalled position in Wesleyan Methodism as a saintly scholar, was wont in private to describe his own attitude as one of 'reverent agnosticism.' The phrase not inaptly describes the state of mind of multitudes of his younger brethren today. On the one hand, they can receive neither universal restoration nor conditional immortality, for they are resolved to be loyal to the New Testament, and they do not find either of these doctrines there. On the other hand, *they dare not speak as did many of their fathers of the doom of the lost, for neither can they find warrant for this in the words either of Christ or his apostles*. Therefore they are agnostics."

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CHURCH UNION IN NEW ZEALAND AND CANADA.

A Canadian journal says: –

"Signs are not wanting that Christian religions await only the coming of a Morgan to be fused into a gigantic trust, if such an ill-omened word may be used to describe Church union. New Zealand Presbyterians have taken the lead by appointing a committee to wait on the Methodists and Congregationalists of that country to consider the merging of all three denominations. Encouraged by this example,

the lay conference of the Methodist Church at Winnipeg has passed a resolution heartily indorsing the action of the New Zealand workers and instructing a special committee to make inquiries with a view of definite proposals of a similar nature to Canadian Presbyterians and Congregationalists."

