

VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER

COMBATING HIGHER CRITICISM IN CANADA

ATHEOLOGICAL storm has been raised in Canada along the lines of "Higher Criticism." This was started by Rev. George Jackson's address before the Y.M.C.A. of Toronto, on February 16th. The meeting was opened by the singing of "Coronation" and prayer, and then the reverend gentleman, greeted with applause, began an attack upon the Scriptures, entitled "The Early Narratives of Genesis," saying: –

"The Early Narratives of Genesis' include in this interpretation, in this use of the phrase, the first eleven chapters of the Book of Genesis. Perhaps I may say that this is really one of the course of monthly Sunday afternoon lectures which I have been giving to men in the Sherbourne St. church; and, inasmuch as this is only one of the course, it is so far incomplete. It is a kind of an illustration of the general attitude of mind toward the Old Testament, which, in the course of this address, I have been trying to explain to my people."

Rev. Jackson's people, "my people," are Methodists and the evidence is that they are following Rev. Jackson into infidelity as his sheep and are not giving attention to the voice of the true Shepherd; possibly because they have not heard his word sufficiently to know his voice and to realize that they should be his people, his sheep, if they would be properly guided to his heavenly fold.

From the stenographic report of Rev. Jackson's presentation he holds that the Bible is not of Divine inspiration; that its statements are not worthy of all acceptance, and that

they are not sufficient "that the man of God should be thoroughly furnished to every good word and work." – 2 Tim. 3:17.

Something of a storm was raised amongst the theologians of Toronto, but apparently not over the truth or falsity of Rev. Jackson's presentations, but rather over the fact that Rev. Dr. Carman, also a Methodist, who took the opposite position favored by the Bible, understood Rev. Jackson to charge him with taking his stand for the Bible, not honestly but through cowardice. When Rev. Jackson withdrew all imputation of cowardice the disturbance subsided. The newspapers noted the fact that many ministers endorsed Rev. George Jackson's position. Some of them, however, thought the controversy of little moment and that religion should be viewed from the practical and not the theoretical standpoint, and afterward called it a "theological tempest in a teapot." What cared this reverend gentleman whether Genesis be true or a lie – a Revelation from God or a work of monkey-men? He took the view that all thinking men were in the same boat in taking the biblical story of the creation of the world...not as correct history. In other words, they had so little faith in the inspiration of the Scriptures as to be unwilling to contend for the same and believed that their theologies would stand, even if the Scriptures should fall. Alas! we believe this to be only too true: that the majority of theological views contain so little of the Bible that its elimination would affect them but little. On the contrary, were they to lose the teachings of Plato and Aristotle respecting human immortality they would be sadly bereft indeed.

A LAYMAN TO THE RESCUE

In the midst of the commotion the Hon. S. H. Blake stepped forward to champion the Bible as a Divine Revelation "worthy of all acceptance and able to make us wise unto salvation." He

has been investigating the matter and finds the colleges of Canada thoroughly given over to Higher Critical Views and teachings (the same being true of the United States and everywhere). The Hon. Blake, supposing these colleges to be blameworthy for the general alienation of ministers from the Bible as the Word of God, has been inquiring into the legality of their teaching theology at all and seems to find, to his own satisfaction at last, that they have no such authority; that the teaching of theology is by Canadian Law restricted to another class of colleges, not Universities. Alas! how rude will be the awakening of the Hon. Blake when he discovers that the theological colleges and seminaries are teaching precisely the same Higher Critical Infidelity – that all the preachers of all the denominations are being ruined as respects faith in the Bible as the Word of God! However, we greatly admire Hon. Blake's stand for the Bible as the Word of God and subjoin some of his arguments which he has presented in pamphlet form under the caption, "The teaching of Religious Knowledge in University Colleges Ultra Vires":

" * * * As the minds of an increased number of young men and women are turning to the mission field, there will no doubt be more students from year to year ready to take advantage of the opinions or instruction referred to. The theological colleges may for this reason look forward to many additional students.

"I believe that this is the cause of the increased interest in legitimate Bible study, which I hope may continue, notwithstanding persistent efforts made in and outside of our theological and other institutions to frustrate such study by seeking to make the Word of God of no effect by the ever-changing motions of a noisy class of men who take for their motto: 'Quantum est quod scimus,' instead of the more lowly one – the mark of the truly learned, as he picks a pebble on the vast ocean of learning – 'Quantum est quod nesimus.' It will be

an evil day for our ministers, missionaries, and teachers, should God permit that what appears to be about the only sure standing ground left us in the world be shaken to its centre; that the statement, 'The Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever,' is proclaimed as an hallucination, and that being born of 'Incorruptible seed by the Word of God' is an old-fashioned delusion, to be rejected with as little compunction as if it were a heathen fable. If we pursue this process of disintegration so that the wonderful cohesive power of this Book shall cease, its author may well write over this wreck, 'They have sown the wind, they shall reap the whirlwind.'"

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HIS OWN CREED

" * * * I have never been in the least shaken in the simple creed as to the Bible given to me as a child over sixty-five years ago.

"(1) Nothing is more probable than that our Creator who is hereafter to be our Judge, should give to his creatures a revelation of his will concerning them, and lay down rules and regulations for the conduct of their life, for obedience to which they shall one day be answerable to him.

"(2) A book is found which purports to come from him, and which gives such a revelation. This Book, wherever found, and made the guide of life, has raised the individual and the people so using it to a position not reached by those ignorant of its contents or who refuse its guidance.

"(3) The God who created the universe and all the wonders therein found and preserves them in their places, could undoubtedly give with accuracy such a revelation and could preserve it to his people for the purpose intended without error.

"(4) No other book has ever been found purporting to be the Word of God, and which could answer the purposes above set forth.

"(5) 'When the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us...the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth,' there was a well authenticated volume in existence to which 'the Light of the world' continually referred, saying: 'Search the Scriptures'; 'The Scriptures must be fulfilled'; 'The Scripture cannot be broken.' He ever referred to this Volume as the Word of God, as the infallible rule, test, and touchstone. He thus endorsed in the most unmistakable manner all the Scriptures as the infallible Word of God.

THE OPINION OF JOHN WESLEY

"I thankfully acknowledge the immense debt I am under to this simple presentation concerning our Bible, from which standpoint I have never been in the slightest degree moved by the ever-changing and never-to-be-relied-upon attacks of those who, not looking or asking for spiritual discernment, merely kiss the Book that they may endeavor to persuade people that their hostile attacks are made in the reverent spirit of investigation.

"Amidst the perpetual attacks made by the clergymen of our various churches, and especially by those in our theological colleges, upon the Bible, it is refreshing to turn to the writings of a well-known clergyman of the Church of England – the Reverend John Wesley, whose use of the Bible wrought so marvelous a change in England at a period when it was nearly drifting to a revolution which might have paralleled that in France of the eighteenth century. He says in the third volume of his writings, page 504:

"It would be excusable if these menders of the Bible would offer their hypotheses modestly. But one cannot excuse them when they not only obtrude their novel scheme with the utmost confidence, but even ridicule that scriptural one which always was, and is now, held by men of the greatest learning and piety in the world. Hereby they promote the cause of infidelity more effectually than either Hume or Voltaire.'

QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED

" * * * You have presented a strong appeal to me in your letter. Will you permit me to urge upon you the two following requests? The first is, Will you use your best endeavors, as chancellor of Victoria College, to place Toronto University and University College in their true position under the incorporating acts, by preventing in either of them, through a 'back door,' or by any other mode of entrance, teaching and examinations in 'religious knowledge,' or 'theological [R4363 : page 100] subjects'? * * * * The second is, If the theological institutions in affiliation with the university insist on instruction in these subjects and on the lines above referred to, then in common fairness let the laymen, whose money is demanded to support such instruction, know exactly what is the teaching that is insisted upon. Let there be a meeting of these new lights, and insist upon a positive statement showing clearly:

"(a) What books of the Bible, in addition to Jonah, do they think should be eliminated as not being the inspired Word of God, to be accepted as such by their students;

"(b) What chapters in the other books of the Bible they consider should be treated in the same manner; what portions of the books are:

(c) Merely myths;

- (d) What allegories;
- (e) What poetical effusions, to be merely admired;
- (f) In what way do they replace the story of the creation;
- (g) Was there any Garden of Eden;
- (h) Was there any Adam or Eve;
- (i) Was there any Satan;
- (j) Was there any sin;
- (k) Was there any punishment for it;
- (l) Was there any promise of a Saviour;
- (m) Was there any deluge;
- (n) Was there any Abraham;

(o) By what means is the ordinary reader to know what portions (if any) of this Book are to be taken as the absolute Word of God, to be accepted and acted upon at the peril of the reader, and when does the apparent Word of God pass into scientific subjects, unreliable history, poetical effusions, myths, allegories, parables, etc., which are withdrawn from the region of inspiration and are merely human utterances, to be dealt with as the reader pleases?

A SCIENTIFIC BIBLE

" * * * * It would be a matter of very great relief to a large number of Christian men if the result of these investigations to which you refer were put into the concrete shape of a real Bible, showing what portions (if any) are the inspired Word of God, to be accepted as such, and putting as an appendix the errant

human portion, including 'mistakes of Moses.' This would go far to settle the minds of many people and to prevent controversies."

A SUGGESTION TO MANY "TOWER" READERS

The following brought us many replies. Other friends in other cities and through other papers may do as well. This is commendable for its brevity and what it does not attempt to explain:

THE SCRIPTURES RE HADES

To the Editor: In reply to the letter by "A Sinner Saved by Grace" in *The American* recently I wish to thank our friend for calling our attention to the Scripture concordance on the several words – hell, pit, devil, second death, fire, brimstone, etc. I assure all American readers that we find on examination of the Scriptures upon these subjects that the word "hell" in the Old Testament is translated from the Hebrew word sheol, which occurs in all 65 times, and in every instance it refers to grave, pit, state of the dead – a state in which there is no consciousness or pain or knowledge or device of any kind.

Please note following texts: Amos 9:2; Psalms 139:8; Psalms 16:10; 6:5; 49:14,15; 89:49; 115:17; Ezek. 32:27; Jonah 2:1,2; Gen. 37:35; 42:38; Job 14:13; 17:13; Eccl. 9:10, etc. In the New Testament we find the word "hades" translated hell, and it is synonymous with "sheol" in the Old Testament. For proof texts see Acts 13:35. In regard to the devil we find Heb. 2:14; Rom. 16:29, etc., that he is to be destroyed. Consequently when we read in the symbolical book of Revelation that Satan and the beast and the false prophet are to be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, which is called the second death, we can be sure it is the same penalty that is

everywhere in Scripture pronounced against all evil-doers. See Rom. 6:23; 5:12; Ezek. 18:4; Gen. 2:17; Psalms 49:12-16; Psalms 46:4; Psalms 6:5; Eccl. 9:5-10; 3:19,20,22-29; Job 14:21, etc.

I would advise all Bible students who are seeking for truth and a clear understanding of the Bible and God's plan of salvation with mankind to procure a free copy of a magazine which treats this subject thoroughly. Address Brooklyn Tabernacle, New York.

A BIBLE STUDENT.

Baltimore, March 1, 1909.

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