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## Pearls And Pebbles

### Modern Athenians and Questioning Detractors

Wm. W. Baker.

Excuse them if you will, the majority of the speakers for the higher criticism speak in this tone:

There is no Trinity.

The so-called divinity of Christ is a divinity of which we all may be partakers.

The atonement is not God's acceptance of the punishment of the innocent instead of that of the guilty, it is one of the universal truths of life in which Christ is its most perfect example.

There never was such an one as Adam.

Regeneration is spiritual ripening.

Other religions besides the Christian religion should be respected.

As to the future life we know nothing, but science may yet tell us more.

The Bible does not contain a code of laws to be accepted without question.

I cannot excuse them if they pose as Christian teachers with such a belief. I'd admire them if they'd leave the churches and colleges, reared and supported by those that uphold the doctrines that ordinary minded people believe the Bible to teach, but I will not excuse them, but rather oppose them, with all the power God gives me, until they go where they belong, to be supported by those they win by such teaching as the above. All honor to the politician that, changing his views, resigned his seat because he had done so. But what can we say of those that pose as Christian teachers, suffering themselves to be supported by those that believe they teach the old-fashioned doctrines and remain among them to poison their minds? Now I grant them the right to poison minds and overthrow the faith of some, if they desire to do so, provided they'll act manly and go where they belong; but I protest against their subtle teaching without a fair and square statement of what they intend to do, before those that trust them. I wish some Baptist Churches had more stamina and would rise up and say: "You do not believe in Christ, nor miracles, nor the Bible. We do Please resign!" Such a thing would not be needed if some great thinkers were as great in honesty of purpose.

You may call this plain speaking, but it's time for it. The time has come for us to take sides. All hail to those that will be clear. If any man will not be so, let him step out till he knows where he stands. This poor, old world needs men that can be definite, those that believe in something. This is possible, for God has not left himself without witness. We can say as did our master: "We speak that we do know and testify that we have seen."

I'd rather be a stoker on an ocean steamer, down in the hot depths of the vessel, sweating my life away, than one supported by a church to preach doctrines believed by it, yet insidiously preaching otherwise. If such a man would be fair and open the people would know what to do—unless, as I've found it in a few cases, he has been there long enough to win their minds to his teaching, then the body is no longer a Christian church.

Another thing about these gentlemen: They look with pity upon those that think otherwise than they. To them the common people know nothing. But I disdain their pity and this is why I speak in the first person. I am willing that they should know where one stands at least. I'll not make an idol of any of them and worse if I can.

The latest move of these brethren is in endeavoring to reduce the miracles of the Bible to things that did not occur by Divine interposition; they are doing their level best to explain away all these evidences of God's supernatural power. They claim that the Israelites passed by the Red Sea on a sand bar, that there were no walls of water on both sides of them as they passed through the sea. Regarding the crossing of the Jordan one of them says: "The text says nothing as to the shape the accumulating water

assumed, nor as to whether the accumulation was caused by miracle or a landslide or some other natural catastrophe, or by engineering, though the silence of the narrative perhaps excludes the last."

As to the falling of the walls of Jericho they account for this quite easily, in two ways: by the tramping of the people as they walked around the city thirteen times, for this shook the foundations of the walls, and the blowing of the horns, which struck the keynote of the acoustic properties of the place—thus the walls fell. In all they determined to minimize the power of God.

Now I ask what the Bible says in this matter: "The children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand and on their left." "As the feet of the priests that bore the ark were dipped in the brim of the water . . . the waters which came down from above stood and rose up in one heap." In the narrative concerning the siege of Jericho we find that the priests blew their trumpets every time they went around, and when they in faith at the end of the seventh time of compassing the city on the seventh day blew their trumpets at the command of Joshua, he said "Shout for the Lord hath given you the city." (Perhaps they would admit that the standing up of Rahab's house was a miracle, at least.)

Faith says "I believe God." God could make the Israelites to triumph as we claim. He can do anything; aye, even make a fish big enough to swallow the Statue of Liberty. He can absolutely override what we call, from our standpoint, nature's law; but I am inclined to believe that some folks have not become personally acquainted with the supernatural new birth enough to believe in much else than the laws of nature. The way some stick to the "letter" and ignore the "spirit" also shows their natural tendency.

But excuse me making a fuss over a few; most of the people would not know of such as those I refer to were it not that we pastors spoke of them, attacked them and defeated them before their eyes every once in a while. Let us go on preaching the truth as it is revealed to us in God's word, giving all glory to God instead of trying to detract from it. Never mind the critics.

One country pastor talked about them so much that a partially deaf old farmer said to a company of male members of the church at the close of service in which the pastor had pitched into higher critics until his face was red with indignation and the bow of his white necktie had been tied to the back of his neck, "What are them higher critics that the preacher speaks of so much?" Then followed an explanation that didn't quite explain; but the old man went away classifying them with Paine, Ingersoll, Catholic priests and all detractors from the truth.

### The Value of a Pastor.

**T**HE success of a church and by success we mean its efficiency in performing its proper function in advancing the interests of the Kingdom of God—largely depends on the character, ability and spiritual power of its minister. Time and again we have seen run-down, discouraged, ineffective churches become prosperous, courageous and efficient by securing the right sort of a man as a pastor. A poor minister can bring any church to the verge of ruin; and a good minister can redeem almost any situation.

We are perfectly aware that at this point we are interrupted by the brother who asks if we do not believe that the Holy Spirit is the important factor in church efficiency. Yes, of course we do. But the divine organization of the church provides for pastors and teachers, and churches ought not merely to depend on the Holy Spirit, but to employ the means which the Holy Spirit has declared He is pleased to bless.

Unless we greatly mistake the recent drift in

all our Protestant congregations is away from the proper recognition of the place of the minister in the divine economy of the church. Take it, for example, in the phase of the ministers' work that has to do with preaching. Prof. William N. Clarke attributes the decline of interest in preaching in part to the influence of the Christian Endeavor Society, which, however intentionally, has magnified the value of meetings for what is called "testimony" at the expense of preaching. Other reasons arising from the development of other organizations could also be readily assigned. No one who is deeply conversant with the inner life of our churches can doubt that there is a lessened interest in the thoughtful, and authoritative unfolding of the truth. The tendency everywhere is apparent to believe that the "testimony" or crude interpretations of those who know little about the Scriptures and who have never deeply pondered the Christian revelation, on the whole, is as valuable as the intelligent, and well-considered exposition of the truth. Our congregations greatly need the insight and outlook that come from prolonged study and meditation and experience of life. And one reason why churches do not become strong is that they are fed on milk and not on meat.

And no church can expect to prosper unless it is properly shepherded, and its activities correlated by a wise pastor. You might as well try to run an industrial establishment without a superintendent or a ship by a committee, as to have a church realize its best efficiency without a pastor. There needs to be some central authority, some one brain which surveys the whole field, and appraising correctly the value of separate resources, can bring the entire force of the organism to bear upon critical points. No deacon, or board, or committee can do this. The church in order to realize itself and to employ its own resources wisely must have a pastor, whose recognized position imposes the right and duty of oversight and guidance. A church makes a capital blunder when it thinks that it can wisely make up arrearsages by going without a pastor, and subsisting on "supplies"; or when it puts youth above wisdom and experience; or does not use all the means in its power to secure the pastor that those who know the church most thoroughly deem to be best adapted to its conditions.

During our inability to go abroad on account of a severe attack of asthma, we have been often comforted and cheered by the good news that comes through the papers, and by letters from brethren that the good work of reviving grace is being enjoyed in many of the churches. Though absent in body we are present in spirit, invoking the Almighty power to be manifested in the conversion of lost sinners, and the God of all grace is hearing and answering prayer, and blessing the work of faith and labor of love performed by many of his dear servants. We are pleased to hear from Rev. E. R. Ganong that God has revived the churches on his field of labor, at Belyea's Cove and McDonald's Point. These churches had become much weakened by deaths and removals, so that they were mostly made up of widows and girls, but now there has been several strong brethren brought in who will be of great help to these struggling interests. Bro. Ganong has baptized over thirty and added them to these churches according to their locations. We had a pleasant call from him a few days ago.

We also had a very pleasant and profitable call from Rev. A. B. McDonald. He is looking hale and hearty as he did twenty years ago; and still continues to preach as opportunity affords with his usual and accustomed vigor and power. May he be spared for many years to proclaim the glad tidings. Many friends from the country are calling upon us and showing their appreciation of the HOME MISSION JOURNAL.

God gives us what He knows our wants require,  
And better things than those which we desire.