

"Theory divided from practice: The introduction of the higher criticism into Canadian Protestant seminaries" by Tom Sinclair-Faulkner.

But why is it, I wonder, that such a very mild heretic as I am sets so many folk protesting?

- The Rev. George Jackson in a letter to one of his students, 25 August, 1922.¹

Why indeed? But there are many puzzles to this story, and that is only one of them. In the year 1910 conservative evangelicals within the Methodist Church of Canada attempted to condemn once and for all the liberal teaching of the higher criticism of the Bible in Methodist seminaries, particularly by Prof. George Jackson, an Englishman teaching at Victoria College and preaching at Sherbourne St. Church in Toronto. The evangelicals were headed by Albert Carman, the 84-year-old General Superintendent of the Church, while the liberals were headed by Nathaniel Burwash, Chancellor of Victoria University. Carman's forces, the histories tell us, were beaten back at the Eighth Quadrennial Conference of the Methodist Church in Canada, held in Victoria, B.C., that year, and the place of higher criticism was henceforth assured in Methodist seminaries.² Despite occasional rumblings that followed the controversy (notably the controversy over "modernism" that split the Baptist churches in the twenties) the Jackson case seems to have represented a turning point in the history, not just of Methodist seminaries in Canada, but of all the mainline Protestant denominations.

Principal Burwash had gone to the Victoria conference in a highly agitated and apprehensive state of mind. He had committed decades of his life to building a strong Methodist college and seminary, first at Cobourg, Ontario, then within the University of Toronto federation. When he arrived in British Columbia for the General

Conference of 1910 he immediately put in a thirteen-hour day preparing notes and tactics for the sessions, enlisting as his chief support the distinguished lawyer, Newton Wesley Rowell.³ Burwash knew that there was a good deal at stake. In the first place it was important to build momentum for the great union movement: since their last General Conference the Methodists had signed the Basis of Union with the Presbyterians and Congregationalists, paving the way for the creation of the United Church of Canada. And in the second place the Methodist Church depended heavily on the leadership and support provided to it by the laymen who, on the one hand, were using modern entrepreneurial skills to build industrial Canada and, on the other hand, were members of the Board of Regents of Victoria University and the Official Board of Sherbourne Street Church in Toronto. I have in mind not only Newton Rowell but men like Chester Massey (farm implements), H.H. Fudger (retail stores), A.E. Ames (investments) and Joseph Flavelle (meat-packing and banking).⁴ "I had hoped Dr. Carman would refrain from attacking the millionaires [sic]," Maggie Burwash wrote to her husband from their summer cottage on Go-Home Bay in Ontario as he prepared to defend George Jackson. "But perhaps it is better he should speak all his mind then everything can be dealt with."⁵

My question is, Was everything dealt with? Burwash did his best. Billeted in the same Methodist home with Carman in Victoria, Burwash faced squarely the need to settle the issue rather than avoid it.⁶ The tactics that he and Rowell developed proved successful against what their party saw as "the attempt to introduce lynch law into the Church,"⁷ but not before Superintendent Carman had delivered

a public blast against those who had brought Jackson to Canada. Burwash does not seem to have found much comfort in his victory. On the long train ride home he remained agitated and anxious. Somewhere outside of Port Arthur at the head of the Great Lakes he fought the motion of the coach to scribble another exasperated note to Maggie, his wife, about Carman's speech:

Carman goes for Workman [sic], the Metropolitan and Sherbourne St. Churches & the rich man in his address which he has in print...⁸

The note trails off into illegibility as he realizes that even the relief of writing about his frustrations is denied to him.

I want to argue that Burwash was right to feel exasperated. The apparent resolution of the controversy over the teaching of the higher criticism dealt inadequately with one important issue that lay at the heart of the matter: the relationship between theory and practice in the study of the Bible among Canadian Protestants. Because this issue remained untouched controversy over the higher criticism has continued to take us by surprise even in recent times -- I mention, for example, the excitement stirred up in 1964 by the use of the word "myth" in the New Curriculum of the United Church of Canada, and again in 1977 by notices of a British collection of essays entitled The Myth of God Incarnate. In making this argument I hope to make a contribution, not so much to the history of doctrines or even of church institutions, but to the history of spirituality in Canada.

It is worth asking how the controversy should have worked out, and happily Ralph Connor has provided us with an answer in one of his later novels, The Arm of Gold (1932).⁹ Following a look at Connor

I want to step back for a brief examination of western understandings of "theory and practice" over the past 2500 years in order to see how these categories may help us to see why the higher criticism remains problematic for Canadian Protestants. To see how we came to this pass it will be necessary to look fairly closely at the piety of the key figures in the Workman and Jackson controversies in the Methodist Church at the turn of the century.

Let us begin with Ralph Connor's answer to how church people should have handled higher criticism. Most of Ralph Connor's novels deal with the Scots who settled Glengarry county in south-eastern Ontario or with the people of the Canadian prairies. Towards the end of his career as the most popular Canadian novelist of the first half of the twentieth century, however, Connor wrote a story about how the stock market crash of 1929 and the higher criticism came simultaneously to a small Cape Breton community. Connor called his story The Arm of Gold, a title that served to explain the meaning of the geographical location of his tale (Bras d'Or) to the uninitiated west of the Straits of Canso, but which also hinted at the mysterious power of New York finance to reach out and touch the lives of those living in rustic isolation far from the canyons of Wall Street. It is a story about the inevitable spread of urbanization, the necessity of integrating the higher criticism of the Bible into the life of faith and, incidentally, the way in which the seminary may be instrumental in resolving the difficulties posed by these two historical developments.

This story tells us a good deal about the aspirations of many Protestant clergy in Canada during the early twentieth century. Ralph

Connor's real name was, of course, Charles W. Gordon and he was a leading Presbyterian clergyman, a conservative proponent of the Social Gospel, and one-time moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Canada.¹⁰ His novels were widely read and, since they were intended to be "realistic" romances (Connor showed a great gift, for example, for reproducing colourful local dialects), I take it that we can read The Arm of Gold today in order to learn something about what Connor and his readers understood the great issues of their time to be and how those issues might best be met. He was a marvellous storyteller who peopled his novels with a variety of characters just like the ones we would expect to find in the times and places about which he wrote, who provided them with trials and tribulations that were equally likely, albeit served up with more fortuitous timing than Providence is usually perceived to provide, and who then produced a happy ending. He was, in short, a myth-maker who revealed what life is really like and how one should live it.

Hector MacGregor is a typical Connor hero: a Presbyterian clergyman with a passion for loving service rather than for doctrine, upright and handsome with a propensity for moderate swearing when under physical stress, skilled as a woodsman and sailor yet blessed with an active intellect. A vacationing New York financier and his flapper daughter are rescued by Hector and he befriends them, drawing on the financier's knowledge of the stock market in order to make a modest killing for his own good purposes. The profits go to pay for medical treatment for Hector's dying brother and to fund a farmer's cooperative that Hector founds, rather as Moses Coady was doing at that time in Antigonish and elsewhere.¹¹

But, alas, some of the local people lack Hector's Calvinist mesure and ride into the stock market on his coat-tails. Hector pulls out when he has the money that he requires but they hang on in time to be caught in the great Crash of 1929. At the same time Hector has been challenged by the village atheist to preach from the pulpit the sort of things he learned in seminary about the Bible: that it began as oral tales, that it was never intended to be a scientific textbook, etc.. Hector rises to the challenge and is promptly threatened with discipline by the leading elder of his congregation.

Is the Bible true? Is the Bible the inspired Word of God? Or is it a collection of myths and fairy tales, mostly lies? If the Bible is not true, if it is not the inspired and infallible word of God, why bother with it? For my part if it is not true, I will not be taking trouble with it.¹²

The elder is not alone. He is seconded by a sharp-tongued old lady who once visited a church in Boston where she heard a sermon by Reuben A. Torrey, one of Moody's successors.

Then that man Mr. Torrey -- oh, he was a great and godly man -- he began on the Bible and he said, I mind like it was to-night: "The Bible is the inspired Word of God, true and unfaillable, the chart and compass on the voyage of life." And then he holds the book to his heart and says: "The book, the whole book, nothing but the book. Every word necessary, every word true." And then he said, "It is like a necklace of pearls: break the string and the whole necklace is lost." And that is what I think. One lie in the Bible and there is no Bible for me.¹³

This is heady stuff that threatens to shatter the congregation, already reeling under the financial disaster inflicted by the stock market crash. It is true that people had been warned not to be greedy, not to hang on to the stock that had already earned a reasonable but not excessive profit.

But was not the minister the one who led them into the stock market in the first place, forsaking the traditional ways of their rural ancestors?

In the end everything turns out well. Out of his own pocket Hector reimburses the people for their losses, and the outraged elder is converted to the way of the higher criticism. The New York financier undertakes to introduce the notion of the Just Price on Wall Street, presumably paving the way for a rapid end to the Great Depression, and the village atheist becomes a Presbyterian. Hector marries a local girl and the flapper turns into a social reformer. But how is all this accomplished? How does one get stubborn Cape Bretoners to accept "charity" from their minister and a fundamentalist elder to take up Harry Emerson Fosdick?

The turning point occurs when the saintly principal of an unnamed Presbyterian seminary in Halifax comes to town and explains, first, that he too invests in the stock market and, second, that his own religious faith necessarily embraces the higher criticism of the Bible. The principal is obviously modelled on the Reverend Clarence Mackinnon, a renowned preacher and principal of Pine Hill from 1909 to 1937.¹⁴ Connor goes to considerable length to show us that the principal is a familiar and highly respected figure throughout Cape Breton.

We have here a fictional account of how the higher criticism and urbanization (i.e. the world of stocks and bonds) are related phenomena that pose spiritual problems to Canadian Protestants. The problems are resolved with the help, not only of training received at seminary, but of the direct intervention of the seminary in the person

of the Principal. It is a marvelous solution and once again one is left thinking that even if Ralph Connor fell short of producing "literature", he certainly knew how to tell a good story. But in point of fact the resolution of the Jackson controversy in 1910 had made it highly unlikely that Connor's fiction could ever be realized in historical Canada.

My point will be made clearer if we pause here for a consideration of the terms "theory" and "practice". In recent years continental historians have become fascinated with the effort to trace the course of fundamental human standpoints that change slowly or very rarely, in durée longue -- I think, for example, of Philippe Ariès on Western Attitudes towards Death.¹⁵ Nicholas Lobkowitz had undertaken a study of the concept of theory and practice in western civilization from Aristotle to the present,¹⁶ and I think that his findings can be broadened to cover not only "concept" (which has to do with intellection alone) but also "standpoint" (which has to do with mentalité, the way in which I am reflectively disposed to live).

Today you and I take it for granted that "theory" refers to abstract ideas and "practice" to their application. We take it for granted because we are modern folk raised in a culture that has contrived to forget the older meanings of these two terms and to use them in a way that owes more to modern science than it does to traditional Christianity. Moreover, we take it for granted that practice is what really counts. We are a race of "doers" whose heroes are engineers and astronauts. Henry Adams made the point vividly when he observed that the symbol of the old order is the Virgin and the symbol of our age

is the Dynamo.¹⁷ So obsessed is the modern West with nervous urgency that when a Catholic reformer prescribes "economics as if people mattered" he calls it "Buddhist economics."¹⁸ Karl Marx, himself a great philosopher, spoke for more than the Communist Party when he dismissed philosophers who only want to interpret the world. "The point," he said, "is to change it."¹⁹

If practice is what really counts in the modern world, then theory is the handmaiden of practice. A good theory is by definition an abstraction which may be applied effectively to the accomplishing of some practical task. This understanding of theory was first articulated by the father ("midwife" might be a better title) of modern science, Francis Bacon,²⁰ but it lies behind the query of every student who indignantly demands, "Why should I learn this stuff?" -- an echo of Bacon's understanding that theory is abstraction whose only justification is that it serves practice.

Before the time of Francis Bacon, before the rise of the modern West, theory and practice bore different meanings and therefore had a different relationship to each other. Praxis meant roughly the same as "practice" now means ("doing"), but there was no conviction that praxis is what really counts. The order of importance was, if anything, reversed by a sneaking tendency to honor theoria over praxis. Theoria did not refer to abstractions whose worth is measured in terms of their applicability to practical ends. Theoria was "contemplation", an activity complete in itself and focussed on higher things, while praxis was "doing", a worldly activity which Plato (and to a lesser extent Aristotle) tended to regard as less worthy than theoria. Origen echoed

him when he compared theoria and praxis to Mary and Martha.²¹

My point is that our spiritual ancestors did not take it for granted that theory is an abstraction intended to serve practice. For them theory included the contemplation of God, an activity that is different from worldly practice and that is certainly not subordinate to it. At their best (or what I hold to be their best) they understood that to be fully human is to live a life in which both theoria and praxis are harmoniously united.²²

This understanding was taken for granted for centuries until, with the development of technology and modern science, our attention was snared by the fascinating possibilities inherent in newly discovered means of mastering the phenomenal world. When our attention shifted, so did our language. "Practice" moved to center stage, and "theory" was gutted of much of its meaning and reduced to the status of an auxiliary. The shift was underway in the sixteenth century when seminaries first made their appearance in the Catholic world, and it was completed in the nineteenth century when the Protestant world began to rely seriously on seminaries for the formation of its clergy. If the fictional accounts of twentieth-century Canadian church life written by ardent Methodists are any indication, Methodists were particularly likely to disparage theory and to praise practice. In "One of the McTavishes," for instance, Nellie McClung presents a distressed sinner who fails to win consolation from an Anglican clergyman. Ineffectual though he is, the Anglican priest offers to tend McTavish's farm and sends the man on to a Methodist minister. But even the Methodist minister cannot talk McTavish into salvation; the redemption occurs

when the Methodist falls ill and McTavish the sinner must mend the minister's faltering faith with words of consolation. McTavish returns to the farm, his face shining with salvation, and the Anglican clergyman cries,

I knew you would find it, and I wanted to see for myself the change that would be worked in you... I have worked all my life, I think, on the edge of things, hoping that some good would come; but it has all been vague, abstract, indefinite. Now I know that once, anyway, I was able to help in a work that counted.

McTavish agrees with the Anglican. "It is not what we say; it is not how well we can pray -- it is what we are, and what we are willing to do!"²³

It is in the light of this understanding of theory and practice that I want to examine the history of the introduction of the higher criticism into Canadian Protestant seminaries. The first Methodist conflict occurred in 1877 when the Montreal Conference condemned a pamphlet entitled Methodism and Catholicity (1876) by the pastor of Sherbrooke Church, the Reverend James Roy. Roy was removed from his pulpit on the grounds that his views contradicted the Methodist Articles of Religion, and some of those views plainly favored the higher criticism, then flourishing on the European continent but only beginning to make its appearance in Canada.²⁴ Though Roy's dismissal divided his congregation the incident made little stir in the Church as a whole.

This was not the case with the controversies involving Professor George Workman whose advocacy of the higher criticism over the years kept his name so much in the center of attention that Chancellor Burwash (see page 3 above) was convinced that Carman was

aiming at Workman even as he attacked Jackson in 1910. One of the first men to be hired to teach in a Methodist seminary because of a European doctorate rather than a distinguished pastoral record, Workman had studied under Franz Julius and Friedrich Delitzsch at Leipzig, a father and son who sprang from pietistic Lutheran stock but pioneered higher critical studies at Leipzig.²⁵ Shortly after taking up his duties at Victoria College, then located in Cobourg, Workman was invited to read a paper to the Victoria Theological Union, a forum in which theological students and clergy regularly gathered for intellectual stimulation. On 28 May, 1890, Workman spoke on "Messianic Prophecy," arguing that the popular conception of prophecy as prediction was "entirely inadequate" and quoting in support of his case the words of Professor Charles Augustus Briggs: "It is one of the evil fruits of an unwholesome apologetic that has been transmitted to us from the previous century..."²⁶ Workman might have been more astute in his choice of authorities: Briggs was an American disciple of W.R. Smith who had been removed from his chair at Aberdeen for undermining the authority of Scripture in 1881, and Briggs was himself tried for heresy in 1891. Suspended by the Presbyterians in 1893, Briggs later became an Episcopalian.²⁷ In any case, the thrust of Workman's remarks was that the messianic prophecies of the Old Testament were not definite predictions of the coming of Jesus, but a less specific expression of cherished Hebrew hopes for Jehovah's anointed monarch.²⁸

The address delighted its audience and the Secretary of the Theological Union opined that "Nothing could be more conducive to the prevention of intellectual ruts among the clergy of the Methodist Church."²⁹

But when word of the lecture spread to other parts of Ontario, the Guelph Conference struck a Committee on Alleged Rationalistic Teaching in Victoria College and, on its recommendation, adopted a motion condemning Workman's views.³⁰ The Bay of Quinte Conference (Workman's home body) retaliated with a statement of support for Workman and hard words for Guelph's manner of proceeding,³¹ but when Workman was invited to give the same lecture to the Toronto Conference the assembly was unable to reach agreement as to whether to support or condemn Workman. There seems to have been a good spirit at the Toronto meeting, however, for Superintendent Carman's address was laced with humorous comments on how Methodists should be proud of their ability to differ with each other honestly.³²

The ethos of Canadian Methodism was going through considerable change at this time, as the student editor of Acta Victoriana observed late in the year.

The old circuit-rider has fulfilled his mission and gone home to God. It is daily becoming more of a necessity that the preacher should be a college-bred man, and we are glad to know that the Methodist Church is not behind the times.³³

It is apparent, however, that there were still some circuit riders left in western Canada who had no room for the higher criticism in their saddle bags. Pressure from this source led the Board of Regents of Victoria College to urge Workman to transfer from the faculty of Theology to that of Arts where he might provoke less criticism. Workman, who had already submitted one statement of his personal faith to the Board, protested and submitted a new statement. The new statement was not much altered from the old and, in January, 1891, the Board asked

Workman to end his comments on the higher criticism. Workman objected to the request and resigned from the College altogether, but not before many of the students had openly demonstrated their appreciation of his work. Superintendent Carman, on the other hand, had formed part of the opposition under the leadership of E.H. Dewart, editor of The Christian Guardian, the church's official newspaper.³⁴ Dewart had replied to Workman's publication with a 256-page book entitled Jesus the Messiah in Prophecy and Fulfilment: A Review and Refutation of the Negative Theory of Messianic Prophecy.³⁵ Though the church editor had responded temperately to the initial reports of Workman's position, during 1891-2 it was difficult to find an issue of The Christian Guardian that did not carry some refutation of the higher critics in general. One satirical piece told of an old deacon who began snipping offending sections from the Bible every time his preacher criticized them until at last only the front and back cover remained.³⁶ When the Toronto Globe offered a defence of Workman's position in the name of Dr. Lyman Abbott, Dewart remarked that Abbott "is known as a very loose theologian."³⁷

The details of the 1890-2 controversy were purged from the minutes of the Board of Regents of Victoria College, no doubt because the revelation of divisions within the Board could not be expected to be edifying to outsiders. But the record of Workman's subsequent course has been better preserved. After leaving Victoria College he was unemployed until in 1904 he was appointed to the faculty of Wesleyan Theological College, Victoria's counterpart in Montreal, where students began to complain to the college administration that Workman was undermining their faith with his lectures on the Bible. Some young men were

reported to be in tears over the matter and, on 22 October, 1907, the Board of Governors terminated his appointment by the decision of a narrow majority (10 to 7). Workman appealed in vain, first to the Board itself, then to Superintendent Albert Carman, then, rightly suspecting that this time there would be no other Methodist refuge to which he might repair as he had in 1904, laid his case before Justice W.A. Weir of the Superior Court, District of Montreal, Province of Quebec.³⁸

Today a college professor might be expected to plead such a case on the grounds of academic freedom, but in 1911 Workman took his stand as a faithful Methodist instead. He argued that the Methodist Standard of Doctrine should be interpreted according to Scripture, not vice-versa. It was an occasion in which a troubling point in the life of the Methodist Church might have been resolved in a disciplined way, but unhappily the court record reveals an angry power struggle rather than a faithful search for Christian truth. It appears that the Board of Governors, acting initially because of student complaints, had failed to take notice of a petition in support of Workman signed by 36 students. When the Board's secretary was asked by the court to produce the minutes of the Board's hearings, he explained that in the end he had torn up the only copy and now could not remember what had happened to the fragments. Complicating the matter further was the fact that the Board directed its criticism of Workman at his doctrinal views in general, not at his teaching in the classroom, and relied extensively on hearsay evidence.

Justice Weir, a former cabinet member of the Liberal government of Quebec and a Protestant layman who did not hesitate to look critically at clerical positions, found in favor of Workman, charging court costs and \$3500 damages against the College. His lengthy decision was overturned, however, by a laconic ruling of the Court of King's Bench on 1 February, 1913, which decided that Weir had no business ruling that Scripture is superior to the Methodist Standard of Discipline since secular courts ought to refrain from overruling ecclesiastical courts on any matter of belief or discipline. This seemed to fly in the face of the precedent that had been set by the lengthy Guibord case fought out in Montreal during 1869-75,³⁹ but in fact reflected the historical differences between the state's relationship to the Catholic Church in Quebec and the state's relationship to the Protestant churches. In any case George Coulson Workman was finished as a Methodist seminary professor. He moved back to Toronto where he found occasional employment as a temporary pastor in liberally inclined urban congregations such as that of Metropolitan Church until he died in 1936.⁴⁰

The Workman controversy spanned 23 years, overlapping two other disputes at the University of Toronto over the teaching of the higher criticism. In 1908 University College offered classes in "Religious Knowledge" (a term chosen to emphasize its independence of any denominational responsibilities) in which advanced biblical criticism was featured. The incident did not initially involve Superintendent Carman but he later supported Samuel H. Blake, an evangelical Anglican member of the University of Toronto Board of Governors, who launched a formal protest and insisted that the offending courses be dropped from

the curriculum.⁴¹ Blake had been one of the founders of Wycliffe College, an Anglican seminary founded at Toronto in protest against the High Church standpoint of Trinity College, which was itself Bishop Strachan's rebuttal to the "infidel institution" that had been born under the name "University College" in 1850.⁴² The Board of Governors, however, ruled on 20 December, 1909, that the study of the Bible as literature was an acceptable and necessary feature of the curriculum of the University of Toronto, and so the matter was closed.⁴³

The Jackson controversy was of greater moment than either the Workman or Blake affairs and unwound at approximately the same time. The Reverend George Jackson was a preacher on loan from the British Wesleyans who filled the pulpit at Sherbourne Street Church in Toronto from 1906 to 1909, joining the teaching staff of Victoria College in 1908 as Professor of English Bible. In February, 1909, Jackson offered a lecture at the Toronto YMCA in which he presented the higher criticism's understanding of the Book of Genesis. Report of the lecture led Superintendent Albert Carman to write an eloquently acid critique of Jackson's position which Carman published, not in The Christian Guardian or in the courts of the Church, but in a letter to the editor of the Toronto Globe. Carman was angry that Jackson should

...count it an achievement to startle the uninstructed youth in a Young Man's Christian Association contrary to its genius and law by attacking the historicity of Holy Writ on points absolutely unassailable, if we have a Christian faith at all, thus loosening moral bonds, debauching the public mind and producing ten or a hundred doubters when, as he boasts, he might forsooth effect possibly the cure of one or two.⁴⁴

A flurry of letters to the Globe followed in which Jackson, Carman and

Jackson's lay supporters at Sherbourne Street Church took part. Passions were inflamed but, according to The Christian Guardian, "An Amicable Settlement" was reached on 23 March, 1909, when the Victoria University Board of Regents gave approval to a statement presented to it with the signatures of every faculty member appended to it. The statement purported to resolve the apparent conflict between the teaching of higher criticism and the formation of Methodist clergy and, since both Jackson (as a member of the faculty) and Carman (as chairman of the Board of Regents) had put their names to the document, the matter seemed to be closed.⁴⁵

But it was not. Following reports of Jackson's lectures as a visitor to Ohio Wesleyan College in April, 1909, Dr. Carman concluded that Jackson had broken the "amicable" agreement not to give publicity to his controversial views. Carman's angry letters to Chancellor Burwash in the fall of 1909 reveal that he considered Jackson to be a liar and that the Ohio affair confirmed him in his conviction that higher critics were by nature given to duplicity.⁴⁶

The dispute gathered momentum as word of Jackson's position and Carman's charges spread by letter and word of mouth. It came to a head in the Eighth Quadrennial Conference at Victoria, B.C., in the fall of 1910 described at the beginning of this paper. The ponderous procedures of the Methodist General Conference damped the confrontation somewhat, but the fact that interested parties held positions of influence stirred emotions. The chairman, for instance, was Dr. Carman himself, while the secretary of the Committee on Education that drafted the procedures under which Jackson was handled was Salem Bland, a longtime

exponent of the higher criticism who was himself to be removed from the faculty of Wesley College in Winnipeg seven years later.⁴⁷ The Reverend Dr. Solomon Cleaver, himself a former minister of Sherbourne Street Church, led the floor attack on Jackson's teaching, saying, "If we want souls saved in our churches we cannot expect to have such when this teaching prevails." He was seconded by Mr. F.W. Winter, a Toronto layman:

This is the most important matter that has ever come before this Conference. I am not a man of scholarship, but I have some common sense. I rejoice to say that I believe in Jesus Christ as the divine Son of God, but as the higher critics teach about Him He is no Saviour at all. These higher critics base their arguments on baseless assumptions. Their teachings are shipwrecking the faith of hundreds.⁴⁸

George Jackson himself was not present at the Conference; he was in England attending to his dying mother. Chancellor Nathaniel Burwash and Newton Wesley Rowell had to sit through Superintendent Carman's opening address to the Conference in which he obliquely slashed at Jackson and his wealthy lay supporters,⁴⁹ but Carman in turn had to listen in silence as Burwash and Rowell made a rebuttal to Cleaver and Winter's attack. The whole case was then lifted out of the plenary discussion of the Conference and referred to the Committee on Education for further study by a vote that passed by a strong majority:

Resolved, that having provided adequately for such cases as are referred to in this resolution, this General Conference affirms its allegiance to Christ as King, and Saviour and God, and its faithful adherence to the Word of God which liveth and abideth forever; That as in His word God has spoken to us by His Son, we acknowledge Him as the infallible teacher, as well as revealer, of the things of God.⁵⁰

In effect this left the discipline of seminary professors in the hands of their colleges rather than the General Conference. Jackson's opponents seemed to have abandoned the struggle for no charges were brought against him and, from this point on, higher criticism was taught without formal challenge in the Methodist seminaries of Canada. Jackson returned to England in 1913 to become Professor of Homilectics and Pastoral Theology at Didsbury College, Manchester, but his reputation had preceded him and he faced a challenge at the General Conference of the British Wesleysans that covered the same ground.⁵¹ Jackson cleared this hurdle and a final one that was presented at the Conference of 1922 in Sheffield, settling the question of the orthodoxy of the higher criticism among British Methodists as well.⁵² In the last instance the conservative evangelical who had led the way against Jackson and others like him met the decision to refer the charges back to a committee by announcing in disgust that he would proceed no further since it seemed "utterly useless to try to defend our standards."⁵³ The higher critics were safe, at least in the lecture hall.

But why is it that their views so rarely circulate outside the lecture hall? And why did the controversy, apparently resolved at Toronto in 1909 and Plymouth in 1913, flare up again in Victoria in 1910 and in Sheffield in 1922? I think that the answer lies largely in the fact that both in Canada and England those who sought peace achieved it by defining the work of the higher critics as theory, abstractions to be considered apart from that which is "really" important: the practice of piety.

There is no need to quote in full the 1300-word statement with which the faculty at Victoria College tried to resolve the conflict in 1908. It began with an affirmation that the Theological Faculty aimed to teach in accordance with the Church's fifth Article of Religion:

The Holy Scriptures contain all things necessary to salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite to salvation.⁵⁴

But the statement then went on to note that there were two different views of the Scriptures: some held them to be perfectly and completely inspired, others held them to be humanly fallible records of God's own revelation. Though the two views contradicted each other, the statement argued that both were consistent with the fifth article given above and could be supported by passages from John Wesley's own sermons and notes! In order to resolve the dilemma the statement then went on to distinguish between what theological professors think in the classroom and what they and their students preach in the pulpit.

Inasmuch as perfect honesty in the investigation of truth and perfect candor in its statement are essential parts of our religion, and especially imperative in our schools of theology, standing as they do side by side with the great institutions of learning in the country, so long as our theological professors maintain their personal vital relation to Christ and the Holy Scripture, and adhere to the doctrinal standards of our church, Victoria College recognizes that they must be left free to do their own work in order that in an atmosphere of perfect Christian candor and true intellectual liberty they may conserve the faith of our church in the minds of those who in days to come shall minister in our pulpits. Our experience is that only as young men of a great university have full confidence that their instructors give them honest convictions reached by perfectly candid and scientific methods, will they retain their faith in Christianity itself.⁵⁵

There were two sources of ambiguity in this statement. First, its Methodist signatories were proud that an institution like Victoria College could take its place beside other academic institutions of higher learning and they claimed the right of academic freedom for Victoria College. At the same time they asserted that as Methodists they adhered to the doctrinal standards of their church. Both higher critics and conservative evangelicals claimed that careful investigation according to scientific method had validated their own findings at the expense of the rival position, and so neither side was worried that there might develop a conflict between "Christian freedom" and "academic freedom". But there has developed a diversion, if not a conflict, between these two freedoms in twentieth-century minds. The Handbook of the Canadian Association of University Teachers, for example, states that academic freedom "involves the right to teach, investigate, and speculate without deference to prescribed doctrine,"⁵⁶ including, one presumes, the Methodist Articles of Religion. One can still make out the message chiselled into the red sandstone over the main entrance of Victoria College: "The truth shall make you free." How many undergraduates today reckon that it is drawn from John 8:32?

The second source of ambiguity is the reference to the professors' "personal vital relation to Christ and the Holy Scripture." Let philosophers and semanticists say what they will about the word "personal", in the popular mind it is sharply distinguished from the word "professional". Methodists who wished to know more of someone's "personal" faith looked to that person's testimony at a meeting, not in a classroom. For example, C.T. Currelly, a Vic graduate and later member

of the Board of Regents, recalled an incident in which a local association sent one of its elders to Victoria to denounce the teaching of "a brilliant young professor ... brought over from Scotland" -- almost certainly George Jackson himself. The elder arrived to find a Methodist meeting in progress, led in prayer by someone not known to him. When the leader had been identified as the professor he had been sent to denounce, the elder declared, "Yon man's good enough for me," and went home.⁵⁷ There was no need to see what went on in the classroom.

It was precisely the same manoeuvre that saved Jackson in England in 1913. Wilbert Howard reports that the vote that confirmed Jackson's appointment was swung by the efforts of Rodney "Gipsy" Smith. It was Jackson's Fernley Lectures, written while he was at Victoria College and published in 1912, that had provoked the opposition on his return to England, but Gipsy Smith urged the lay delegates at the Plymouth Conference to join him at a Sunday evening meeting to hear Reverend Jackson preach. The directness and fervor of his evangelical message won them over and they resolved to discount his academic writings.⁵⁸ Gipsy Smith was naturally inclined to stress the practice of personal piety over the pursuit of abstract theory since he was a former Salvation Army officer engaged in leading revival campaigns for the Wesleyan Methodists following the First World War. Had he been in Canada in 1910 he might have reconciled even Jackson and Carman.

In short, there was ambiguity as to the identity of Christian freedom and academic freedom, personal faith and academic teachings.

The Victoria statement of 1910 tried to avoid future conflict by adding a qualification of the freedom granted to its professors.

Noting that the conservative view of Scripture

has become entwined with the most sacred convictions of many of our people, and has in the past produced a robust and aggressive type of Christian character, we recommend that our public utterances on this question, in the pulpit, on the platform, or in the press, should so present the modern view of Bible interpretation as only to manifest more fully the spiritual power and the Divine truth of the Holy Scriptures.⁵⁹

Albert Carman took this to mean that George Jackson might continue to teach as he please in the classroom but would keep his higher critical views out of the public eye. When Jackson's lectures at Ohio Wesleyan College received public notice, Carman was sure that Jackson had broken the agreement but, as we shall see below, Jackson was equally sure that he had not. In any case the notion that classroom teaching is inoffensive while public statement is not is grounded in the understanding that the former is mere theory while the latter is practice -- a form of witnessing that makes for better lives.

It was precisely this understanding that informed Newton Wesley Rowell in the Victoria debate in 1910. "I am not prepared to say that Jackson ... or the others are correct. I am not capable of expressing an opinion." (This was a polite fiction; though both were laymen, Rowell and his friend, H.H. Fudger, were well read in the latest Biblical criticism.) But Rowell had been at a missionary congress in Europe when he read reports of the debate over Jackson in the Toronto newspapers.

It made me sick. To think that while we were in that Congress discussing the great question of the evangelization of the world, at home they were quarreling over matters of theological controversy. Brethren, let us go forth as men to preach that God is able and willing to save men from their sins, and let us cease this haggling about non-essentials.⁶⁰

The practice of piety is what counts; higher criticism is mere theory. The same denigration of theory was reflected in a committee report at the same Victoria Conference on the Workman controversy which off-handedly remarked that "erroneous doctrine is not to be thought of as being as bad as immorality."⁶¹

A closer look at the spirituality of some of the key figures in this debate will serve to conclude my argument that the controversy was inadequately resolved by treating the higher criticism as theory more or less distinct from the practice of piety. In particular I present Workman, Carman, McLaughlin, Jackson and Fudger.

Both George Workman and George Jackson were Methodist ministers and theological professors, but in Workman the professor dominated. He was, after all, one of the first in Canada to complete doctoral training in Germany and his writings convey an air of rigor and certainty that reflect his pride in the standards he observed. Even a sympathetic student who generally had nothing but warm praise for his teachers said, "No doubt he brought many of his troubles on himself, as he was dogmatic and did not suffer fools gladly."⁶² Besides lecturing and writing in an academic setting Workman frequently appeared at devotional study sessions to speak of the Bible, but here too his tough, analytic approach prevailed. During the hiatus between his employment at Victoria and at Wesleyan he gave a long lecture to Sunday school staff in Toronto which began, "The Bible is the worst understood book in the world ... I intend to say that with respect to historic meaning the Bible is of all books in the world the most understood."⁶³ The misunderstandings were

marshalled in neat orderly ranks, then dismissed with phrases like "erroneous views," "untenable position," "utterly impossible,"⁶⁴ while Workman declared his own faith in the power of faithful human understanding by saying,

I believe the Bible to be a divine book, not because I cannot understand it, but because I can understand it, and because I know it was meant to be understood by those who study it with proper mental and spiritual qualifications. Mark ... qualifications of both kinds are needed... There are difficulties in the Bible, of course,... but there is no difficulty that cannot be fairly and reasonably explained. There are truths in the Bible, too, so deep, so high, so broad that no finite mind can comprehend them; but there is no truth that cannot be rationally conceived and rationally believed.⁶⁵

Workman was persuaded that he could distinguish between the parts of the Bible that were human and the parts that were divine.

Whenever we find in (the Scriptures) an utterance that appeals to our conscience, such as "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart," or a precept that applies to our conduct, such as "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them," we may know that it is divinely inspired.⁶⁶

Workman showed himself a modern Methodist in stressing the importance of studying the Bible in order to live rightly.

We ought to study it practically and experimentally before attempting to teach it, by homing its truths in our heart, by practising its precepts in our business, and by realizing its principles in our life.⁶⁷

There is no room here for a contemplative study of the Scriptures in which the fruit is an encounter with God as an end in itself; the fruit is holy living and doing in this world.

In that respect Workman shared the goals of the conservative evangelicals who opposed him, and it is plain that he won the respect of many of his students. But his sharp dismissal of points of view that were not academically respectable left no room for accommodation and he earned a set of implacable enemies who eventually shut him out of Canadian seminaries. When Nathaniel Burwash sought a peaceful solution to the Workman controversy at Wesleyan in 1908, the pastor of Douglas Methodist Church in Montreal (one of Burwash's admirers and former students) wrote to warn Burwash against Workman.

It is not fair for our theological professors to put us in the position before our people of being "back numbers" or "incompetents" or "obscurantists" in theology without explicitly pointing out our errors. Some of us have been diligent students ever since we left college and we think that a sound exegesis of Scripture only buttresses these great doctrines of Methodism and which are so vital to us because they have been fully verified in our experience.⁶⁸

As the case wound its way through the secular courts Workman became entangled in a characteristic exchange of letters with a conservative evangelical in the pages of The Christian Guardian in which his protestation that he was himself "one with all evangelical ministers" was lost in his demolition of contrary views of Scripture.⁶⁹

The conservative evangelicals, for their part, were remarkably intolerant of the higher critics, in part because of the modern standpoint that respects practice far more than theory. The Reverend J.B. Saunders, for instance, offered a lengthy lecture to the Theological Union of the conservative Conference at London, Ontario, in 1910 entitled "Some Mistakes and Perils of Higher Criticism from a Preacher's Standpoint."

The professor in the college has his special work, and necessarily devotes himself to the minute examination of certain questions that are interesting, academic, theoretical or abstract. But we are in the field; we are where these theories are put to the test and their working character is tried. It is in theology as in medicine. In the medical classroom, fanciful theories and new discoveries are thoroughly canvassed and carefully examined. Possibilities and probabilities are weighed and sometimes advocated, but it is not unusual for the professor to stop in the midst of the experiment or the argument, and say, "This is all very well for the class-room, but practice is a very different thing. Try no experiments there. Keep to well-known working lines, for human lives are at stake."⁷⁰

Saunders had read the higher critics but he dismissed them as Germans, materialists, evolutionists and, finally, "natural men" incapable of spiritual discernment (I Corinthians 2:14).⁷¹

The real leader of the opposition to the higher critics, however, was Dr. Albert Carman, General Superintendent of the Methodist Church, a vigorous man in his seventies at the time of the Jackson controversy. Formerly the head of a Methodist secondary school in Ontario and the last bishop in Canadian Methodism (the office was abolished in the Union of 1884) Carman had given effective leadership in a period of frontier expansion in western Canada. The man who painted Carman's portrait in oils described him as more stern than loving⁷² but there is some evidence that he presided over Methodist meetings with both sensitivity and humor.⁷³ He read the higher critics and lectured on them, rejecting their findings but often speaking with reasoned care. Notes for one address concluded

Think them over.
 Repress uncharitable judgment.
 Yet at the same time remember that a diminished Bible may mean a diminished Christ, & a diminished Christ will mean a diminished Gospel, & a diminished

Gospel will breed a race of spiritual degenerates.
Get facts before you trust your all to theories.⁷⁴

Nonetheless he could be stirred to furious rebuttal when criticized unfairly. When wealthy layman Chester Massey chose to defend Jackson against Carman by describing Carman as a "medieval Pope"⁷⁵ (surely the lowest blow one Methodist could inflict on another) the Superintendent responded:

They say the old man is dogmatic, given to high ecclesiasticism, and good material for a Pontiff of the Middle Ages. So far as the venerable Pontiffs of the Middle Ages stood by the Word of God and the rights of their Ministers I am with them. Dogmatic! and why not? I grew up in a dogmatic country, in a dogmatic age and among a dogmatic people. We demand facts, and build our business and our religion on facts and not on theories, fancies and illusions. It is dogmatism all around me.⁷⁶

It is in the light of this dispute that we have to read Carman's attack on "rich men" and "the money power" in his welcoming address to the General Conference of 1910, which in turn stirred the laymen of Sherbourne Street Church to make a formal reply.⁷⁷

Curiously Carman has been described, in light of a novel written by his son, Albert A. Carman, as one who had "failed with his own family."⁷⁸ In fact The Preparation of Ryerson Embury (1900) reads more like a vindication of the author's father who plainly serves as a model for the hero's father. Ryerson Embury finds that his Methodist upbringing stands up poorly in the face of infidel critiques at college and he drifts from one standpoint to another. In the end young Ryerson aligns himself with the striking workers of his town and the fiery Methodist preacher who speaks for the poor against the respectable capitalists who dominate the town with the self-serving support of clergy

devoted to the higher criticism. This short summary does not do justice to a fairly well-written novel that presents a fascinating study of the development of a young Methodist in Canada at the turn of the century, but it is hard to believe that Superintendent Carman would not have read the story with approval, particularly in his son's portrait of a biblical scholar whose shallow intellect and shallower faith combined to cut Ryerson adrift on the shoals of infidelity.⁸⁰

Carman was a conservative, not a reactionary. He was committed to preserving the missionary drive and personal experience characteristic of Methodism and worried that the cold speculation (as he saw it) of the higher critics would destroy both. In his own way he was a proponent of the social gospel and feared that the presence of personal wealth would blunt the church's search for justice. But did he see his opponents as they really were?

When George Workman was fired from Victoria College in 1891 he was replaced by John Fletcher McLaughlin, Chancellor Burwash's protégé who began as a biologist but was sent to Oxford to master Hebrew.⁸¹ Every bit as devoted to the higher criticism as Workman and Jackson were, McLaughlin managed to avoid direct attack by the conservative evangelicals almost completely. Besides teaching for 41 years at Victoria and serving as Dean of Theology during 1920-32, he influenced students such as biblical scholar R.B.Y. Scott and activist J.S. Woodsworth. It was McLaughlin who drafted the statement signed by Carman and Jackson and all members of the Board and faculty in 1909,⁸² and it may be that his deft distinction between sound personal faith and freedom to teach is reflected in his own practice of conducting devotional study of the Bible

for Vic students on Sunday afternoons. The classes were well attended but clearly extracurricular, and all reference to the higher criticism was made in an irenic and conciliatory manner.⁸³ Although McLaughlin saw the higher criticism as a pious pursuit it can be seen that his reconciling nature inclined him to draw attention away from the latest biblical scholarship when he confronted suspicious conservative evangelicals.

And what of George Jackson himself? Despite his position he was primarily a preacher, not a professor. Unlike Workman he made no original contributions to biblical research and, when he read books, he read to become a better person, not merely to satisfy his curiosity.⁸⁴ Though he wrote easily and, on his return to England, contributed a fortnightly column to The Manchester Guardian, he smarted under the comments of critics who described him as "journalistic."⁸⁵ He gave close attention in his later years to the education of Methodist clergy and Sunday School teachers, urging them to read A.S. Peake and the writings of other higher critics and worrying that clergy read one Old Testament while Sunday School students read another.⁸⁶ Goaded by Carman's attacks he could sound more like Workman than McLaughlin: "Intellectual fear on God's behalf is stupid impiety." But he saw a providential opportunity for preachers to master biblical criticism in order to build a bridge between it and the piety of their people.⁸⁷

It was these remarks (made in the Fernley Lecture) that led to the heresy charges levelled at him in England, but the earlier lectures that brought Dr. Carman down upon him for the second time were, considering the reaction to them, startlingly evangelical. Dedicated to his congregation at Sherbourne Street Church and published as Studies in the Old Testament (1909),

in these lectures he argued that biblical scholarship can and should lead to a vision of God, that the higher criticism had saved souls, including his own, and that the chief importance of advanced biblical study is to lead students to God.⁸⁸

"May I be pardoned a word of personal testimony?" he asked.

Like most men in middle life I was brought up in a belief in the verbal inspiration, the literal accuracy, of every part of the Bible. To my own unspeakable relief I have parted with that ancient dogma for ever; I could as soon go back to it as an astronomer to the days before Copernicus, or a naturalist to the days before Darwin. And yet I am here to testify out of a full and glad heart that the Bible was never so much to me, it was never so truly 'the fountain light of all my day, the master light of all my seeing'; I was never so sure that God is in it. This is my faith; with all who in a spirit of reverent candour will join in these short studies I will do my best to share it.⁸⁹

In offering this testimony Jackson was being true to himself as an evangelical but he was violating the agreement of 1909 by giving publicity to the higher critical view of the Bible. Carman, already suspicious and alerted by letters written by unreflective listeners, failed to recognize Jackson as a brother evangelical and set out to destroy him at the Conference of 1910. Would Carman and Cleaver have been reconciled to Jackson if Jackson had attended the Victoria meeting and preached through the good offices of a Gipsy Smith, as he did later at Plymouth? Perhaps not, but it is quite possible that the split might not have been so bitter as Burwash perceived it to be at the close of the Victoria sessions.

What made the Jackson-Carman confrontation still more tragic was the fact that both desired to reform a corrupt social order suffering

the abuses of urbanization. Jackson had made his mark as a young disciple of Hugh Price Hughes by establishing a highly successful downtown mission in the city of Edinburgh⁹⁰ and one of his sermons was reprinted in The Christian Guardian in 1897, bringing him to the notice of Canadians.⁹¹ Part of it reads like a crib from Charles M. Sheldon's phenomenally successful In His Steps, an evangelical American's solution to the problems of the city, also published in 1897.⁹² Furthermore Jackson had made it plain that he favored church union when he first visited Canada in 1902,⁹³ a project that most evangelical Methodists, including Carman, were coming to see as a way of marshalling Christian forces for the redemption of the modern world.

Jackson was wounded by the conflict. Though he had responded quickly enough to Carman's challenge at first he did not have Workman's willingness to carry on a dispute indefinitely⁹⁴ and found it difficult to understand those who did. His farewell sermon to Sherbourne Street Church, given in 1913 at about the same time that Albert Carman retired as General Superintendent, made an oblique reference to himself even as he spoke ostensibly of a Scottish minister whose views of the Bible had placed his career in jeopardy:

I know a minister in the Old Country - R.J. Campbell - who a few years ago was denounced up hill and down dale as a dangerous man and a heretic; and I am not going to say that he did not deserve, because of the unwisdom of his speech, some of the things that came upon him. But a little while ago, in a company of his own brethren, he made use of words like these: 'Jesus Christ is the central fact of my spiritual life. I worship Him; I trust my soul to Him for time and for eternity.' Brethren, when a man speaks thus, our quarrel with him should surely be at an end. He has the root of the matter in him, and he can be left safely, in things theological, to work out his own salvation.⁹⁵

What was it that won for Jackson the support of the wealthy business leaders who made up the Official Board of Sherbourne Street Methodist Church? Besides being a splendid preacher Jackson approved the things that such laymen admired but that other clergy have frequently scorned: for example he had praise for the Salvation Army (though he wished that they held more respect for the intellect) and for Bruce Barton's robust Jesus in The Man Nobody Knows.⁹⁶ Chester Massey, who contributed to Workman's legal defence fund⁹⁷ and attacked Carman in the pages of the secular press, reminded his colleague Rowell that the higher critics were to be supported because they used "up-to-date methods" and did "everything in a business-like manner."⁹⁸ Jackson reciprocated this respect for their common style and insisted that both preacher and layman must do the work of the church -- the preacher in the pulpit, the layman in the world.⁹⁹

He found a kindred spirit in Harris Henry Fudger, who was president of the Robert Simpson Company and ran the Infants Class at Sherbourne Street Church. Jackson was welcomed into his home to lead discussions of English literature and received Fudger's steady support, though Fudger was by habit more conciliatory than, say, Chester Massey.¹⁰⁰ His suggestion to a friend that one should be reluctant to treat different parts of the Bible with the same respect was phrased in an almost courtly manner.¹⁰¹ He read philosophers, notably Bergson, with interest, though it is not clear that he grasped them. Consider his opening words to a Bible class he was conducting:

Loyalty to Jesus Christ is the essence of Christianity. This is my own short creed and I believe it is one in which we can all join. If he hold to this, I shall not quarrel with any man about inspiration, revelation of other theological dogmas. In fact I shall not introduce here at all those controversial subjects which belong to the field of higher criticism and expert scholarship.

I would rather try to establish some vital practical relation between our conversation and study here together and our every day work and administration of our lives.¹⁰²

Once again we see the higher criticism relegated to the realm of abstract theory and emphasis placed on practice in the world. Yet we know that Fudger was well acquainted with the higher criticism and, according to Nathaniel Burwash, given to contemplation as well as to action.

No one I have ever known sought the light of knowledge on matters of religion more eagerly, and no one knew better the serious import of the changes going on in the intellectual world. This is why he sponsored so heartily the Student Christian movement in our Universities. To talk with Mr. Fudger on these matters was as if one went to church. It was a deeply religious action and I can bear witness that I never returned from one of these evenings in his library that I did not feel mentally and spiritually invigorated.¹⁰³

Even when allowances are made for the fact that Burwash was giving a eulogy here it is apparent that Fudger was capable of theoria when in private or among intimate friends.

But it is no wonder that Fudger left such meditations in his study rather than introduce them into his Bible class. Immediately after the Victoria Conference of 1910 an anonymous layman anxious to redeem the seminaries wrote to The Christian Guardian regretting "the inability of the (preacher) to apply the abstract learning he has received in college to the concrete conditions of life as they exist."¹⁰⁴

The suggested solution was to appoint a new professor ("not necessarily a minister"!) who would give students at Victoria College what they so obviously lacked in their preparation for ministry. Even those who respected the work of the higher critics found it difficult to believe that their findings could usefully be circulated outside the lecture hall.

Though the Jackson case made it reasonably safe to teach the higher criticism in Canadian Protestant seminaries, it resulted in a double tragedy. First, it split the social gospel and unionist forces at a time when they needed to get on with the practical tasks they had set themselves. It was not only the Presbyterians who began to drag their feet over the proposed union shortly before the First World War; Methodists dissipated some of their own unionist energies in this conflict over the higher criticism. And second, the Jackson case invited seminary graduates to avoid unpleasant conflict by warning them that the higher criticism must be mastered in the classroom but not preached from the pulpit. As The Christian Guardian warned preachers at the time, in an editorial called "What to Leave Out,"

Abstract theological speculation has had its day,
and has ceased to appeal to the practical men and
women who sit in our pews.¹⁰⁵

Ralph Connor's fictional hero Hector MacGregor tackled the problem head on in The Arm of Gold and won, but not all fictional heroes did so. Ryerson Embury aimed to refute the infidels with the weapons of the higher critics in open debate before Christian congregations,¹⁰⁶ but the learned critic to whom he turned for guidance proved to be so shallow in both intellect and faith that Ryerson temporarily lost his own way.

The professor of Bible who appeared in Grace Irwin's fictional account of a young theologian at Victoria College in the period following the First World War treated the Scriptures in an equally cold and facile manner, with results equally dangerous to his students.¹⁰⁷

George Jackson, on the other hand, was a higher critic who consistently strove to read the Bible with "awe," as he put it,¹⁰⁸ studying the Scriptures for themselves, not only as a tool for better living. Though rooted in the modern age he attempted to do both theoria and praxis and to unite them harmoniously in his work as a seminary professor. He was not altogether successful, in general because of the modern tendency to denigrate theory and thus to divide it from practice, in particular because of the Methodist decisions of 1909-10 that exacerbated this tendency among Canadian Protestants.

* * * *

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