

THE MONOPOLY OF INSPIRATION.

"It does not lie along the track of Biblical teaching that we should allow to the prophets, Apostles and olden saints of God any monopoly of inspiration."

These words are taken from a sermon recently printed by an orthodox divine, or rather a divine belonging to an orthodox church. They are either the dullest of commonplace or else shockingly erroneous. If inspiration simply means any sort or degree of divine influence, then of course it is common to all believers, no one of whom becomes such without being effectually called of God. But if it mean the divine influence which enables men to make an authoritative record of the revealed will of God, then the whole Scripture with one voice declares that this is a monopoly. As Peter says, "men spake from God being moved by the Holy Ghost." Other persons might speak and did speak very good things, but they did not speak from God or in God's name, nor were their utterances directly prompted by the Holy Ghost. With their words was always mingled more or less of human weakness and error. But Scripture is a different article. It is the Word of God, the utterance of his will through chosen mediums. It is appealed to as decisive of all controversies. "What saith the Scripture?" "The Scripture cannot be broken." According to the Apostle the chief advantage of the Jews over the Gentiles was that to them were committed "the oracles of God;" that is, they had divine utterances which other nations did not possess. These utterances were in writing, and marked off from all other recorded utterances as express declarations of the Most High.

And in this sense the Bible is and ever must be a monopoly. It arrogates to itself an exclusive privilege. And there is an anathema to any one who adds to or takes from it. But then it is a monopoly like the sun, which shines for all. Its pages stand open for every child of man, and it is free to any one to become wiser than his teacher. But so far, while many have shown the will, none has had the ability to accomplish this. The Bible still stands at an immeasurable remove above all competitors. Everywhere else we soon see an end of all perfection, but here, deep as any one may send down his sounding line, he feels and knows that there is a

lower depth beyond his reach. A thousand generations cannot exhaust the riches of Scripture. It is the one book which cannot wear out, which is the same everywhere and at all times, which is independent of race, of climate, of condition, indeed of all conceivable circumstances, being God's book for man as man.

It is then strictly a monopoly. Nothing else has the secret. Here

God speaks as he speaks, or has spoken nowhere else. So the book itself declares. So the Church declares. So the voice of mankind agrees. God is indeed not far from any one of us, and he is moving in the energies of his illuminating or sanctifying or guiding grace wherever the gospel is known. Individuals and communities feel the animating impulse and rejoice in it. But this is not "inspiration," except that word be used in a loose, popular sense. It is not the inspiration which the Apostle in the well-known passage in Second Timothy 3:16, ascribes to the written word, and which makes that word so profitable, nay, which makes it authoritative for its authors and for everybody else.

It is a very sad thing to see any one, whether intentionally or unintentionally, undermining the claim of God's Word to absolute obedience. Yet this very thing is done when a man spreads inspiration over the whole life of every believer and denies anything peculiar or special to the inspiration of the human authors of the Bible. The result, sooner or later, to every one who accepts this theory, must be that every man becomes his own Bible, there is no longer an objective standard of truth, and soul-destroying heresies may plead the same sanction as the Word which is able to make wise unto salvation. When teachers say such things, what must the taught say? Alas, when the blind lead the blind, both fall into the ditch.—*Christian Intelligencer*.

We believe in the life of the world to come, and look forward to it, just so far as we believe in God, and live upon his gifts, and look forward to His promises; as Jesus believed and lived and looked forward.—*R. Ellis*.

Never hold any one by the button or the hand in order to be heard out; for, if people are unwilling to hear you, you had better hold your tongue than them.—*Lord Chesterfield*.

Correspondence.

Letter from India.

BOMBAY, INDIA,
Feb. 14, 1884.

Bro. J. F. Floyd:

Your letter, dated some three months since, was received Jan. 2nd. On the envelope which lies before me I count thirteen postmarks, indicating the long journey it has come.

It is a source of satisfaction to us to know of the interest felt by our brethren on the Pacific slope in the work undertaken by your missionaries in India. It is your work as it is ours—a work in which all who love the Lord and his cause must feel a common interest. As yet it is in its infancy and for a long time may require fostering care and patient waiting ere we shall see any results of our efforts. The sad truth forces itself upon my mind that the people of India are not seeking after God. There are exceptions, but as a general rule the people seem satisfied with the religion of their fathers. Some of the educated have lost faith in their ancient systems, but, unwilling to accept of Christianity, they are rapidly lapsing into infidelity. The credulity that accepts implicitly the most palpable absurdities is naturally followed by its opposite extreme.

It is painful to witness some of the so-called efforts to Christianize the people of India. Romanism comes in and offers a compromise with their idolatry, for the sake of gathering numbers into her fold. The proselyte takes on the name of Christian and dons foreign clothing, but in too many cases his life remains the same. The Salvation Army with drums and trumpets and banners inscribed "Blood and Fire," are doing much to degrade the religion they profess to honor, in the eyes of the heathen. But aside from all this there is steady effectual work being done, which is already telling. The gospel is slowly but surely finding its way into the hearts and consciences and lives of men, and the results are most apparent. There are, indeed, mountains of ignorance and superstition and sin to be removed, and the mighty task grows in magnitude when one is brought face to face with the reality.

After waiting more than a month I am still limited in time so that I am only able to write a short letter.

I shall be happy to communicate with the readers of your paper occasionally, as time and other duties permit. Letters from the home land are always welcome and furnish one of our greatest comforts in this strange land. I have not had the privilege of reading your paper for some time, but hope to do so before long. With best wishes for the success of that enterprise and every other which seeks to strengthen and extend the cause of Christ, I am very sincerely yours,
M. GRAYBIEL.

Letter from Bro. M. N. Warren.

WEST CHEHALEM, OR,
March 23, 1884.

Christian Herald:

Having returned from Iowa (after an absence of four years) I am engaged in holding a meeting at this place. The Seventh Day Adventists have been holding meetings nearly continuously (since the 20th of January last) until recently. The people are anxious to hear the truth. They (the Adventists) have indirectly done some good by stirring up the people to read the Scriptures. Their main object was to get the people to become Sabbatharians. My object in writing now is to call attention to their exposition of Rev. 13th. The "two horned beast." They affirm that the United States is that two horned beast, against this baseless, graceless and sinless assumption I urge seven objections.

1. The United States did not derive its power from the beast (pagan Rome) and the two horned beast did.
2. We are twelve hundred years too far down the stream of time to make it possible (for the 1260 years had gone by).
3. Ours is a Republic, that was a monarchy.
4. Ours (government) has no horns, that had two.
5. That came up out of the earth (meaning powerful or quiet times); ours was established by eight years of war, revolution, blood and thunder with England.
6. The Catholic power did derive its power from pagan Rome.
7. It has two horns, civil and ecclesiastical, the civil horn was broken off the 2nd day of September, 1870, by Victor Emanuel entering Rome and depriving the Pope of political power, and the spiritual horn is so weak the Pope cannot hook much. More soon if desired.

M. N. WARREN.

P. S.—I am on my way up the Willamette valley as far as Albany, and may call at your sanctum.