

Some Further Statements about the Bible and the Views of Rev. H. F. Waring, M. A.

BY E. M. SAUNDERS, D. D.
MR. WARING'S RESOLVE.

"The denomination must face the issue," is a sentence reiterated by Mr. Waring to his large and intelligent Bible class. No less frequently did he express the wish to me, beginning to do so immediately after the Convention in St. John, that I would criticise his views in the MESSENGER AND VISITOR. In yielding to his repeated solicitations and in undertaking to do what he said must be done, I have, strange to say, incurred his disapproval. The brother, however, should take my writing philosophically, and subside into his accustomed mildness and patience.

AUTHORITIES QUOTED BY MR. WARING.

I have read with care the quotations made by Mr. Waring in support of his views. The opinions expressed by Dr. Sanday, Dr. Davidson, Prof. Kirkpatrick, Dr. Flint, Dr. Lorimer, Dr. Burton, Dr. Wood, Dr. Faunce and Prof. Ganong give no support to the views advocated by Bro. Waring.

Doctor Sanday does not say that by the "inspiration of the Bible," he means that divine influencing of Hebrews, Jews and early Christians by virtue of which they had "religious conceptions"—the Bible. Neither he nor any others referred to, gives any support to the national production of the Bible.

Doctor Vedder wanted explanations. The denomination wants explanations. Why are they not given? Let Brother Waring say, in his own language, that he believes the Bible is the Word of God; and that it was supernaturally given to the world through men elected and inspired by the Holy Spirit to make the revelation—and that it is the only supernatural revelation given to the world, and the fog will be lifted and his belief will then come into clear view. That is the doctrine held from Moses to St. Paul; and from Paul to this day. Let this utterance be made in clear language, and the explanation will be satisfactory, and will bring Brother Waring into harmony with the denomination. He can then plead for clearing away mistranslations and interpretations which have occurred in the transmission of the Scriptures across the centuries since they were written. Religious beliefs are not intended to be concealed and protected like buried treasures. They are to be proclaimed on the housetops. Paul "declared the whole counsel of God." He kept back nothing.

Brother Waring calls on me for my belief, and, at the same time, tell the public that I have given it. He should call for the belief of the preacher of those three sermons in Halifax and that one at the Convention; and the teacher who conducted that discussion as it was conducted in the Bible class; that preacher should certainly give the denomination his views in language as definite and emphatic as he can command. That preacher should not allow people all over the Province to enquire and speculate whether he is an evolutionist in inspiration, a Unitarian or something different. He should surely tell them just what he believes. The denomination would then know whether his views were evangelical or not. Up to this time Brother Waring is on the Unitarian evolutionist ground in the matter of Bible inspiration. Let him abandon that ground and take his stand on the solid rock.

Looking at it with a view to form an impartial judgment of its drift, its tendency, I say it with pain, but I say it most sincerely, that the tendency of Mr. Waring's discussion of the Bible is to weaken and unsettle the minds of the people in their belief, that the Bible is an infallible revelation from God, and this is a serious matter, both in respect to the influence it will have on his own life-work, and the effect it will have on others. And a remarkable matter it is, that he gives nothing as a definite substitute for the belief he seeks to undermine and destroy.

Rev. A. C. Dixon, D. D., says:—"The men who have been blessed of God in winning souls to Christ, have been without exception believers in the inspiration and infallibility of the Word of God. It is the sword of the Spirit; and he does not use men who cast doubt upon its genuineness. . . . The hope of the church is in the fact the people are ceasing to look to the Universities as interpreters of the Bible; but they are beginning to interpret the Universities in the light of the Bible."

Doctor Buckley in the Christian Advocate, 1901, says:—"Some of us can more easily believe in the inerrancy of the Bible than in the inerrancy of the critics."

Doctor Lorimer refers to the Vedas: Doctor Hovey or Doctor Hodge could have consistently said what Doctor Lorimer has said.

Let I may be misunderstood in my references to the comparing of the Bible with other religious literatures, let me say that more than twenty years ago, I made a speciality of reading the history of Hindoo religion. I also read the Rig Vedas, its oldest sacred writings. This, together with a general knowledge of other eastern religious systems, enabled me to form an intelligent judgment of comparative religion, as a study to determine the truth of the Bible. To prescribe to the people the writings of India, Japan, Persia, Greece and Rome as a means of determining the inspiration of the Bible, seems to me fantastic in the highest degree.

The evolution theory, "the gradualness of revelation," as Doctor Lorimer says, strikes at the entire superstructure of revelation—at the Bible as God's revealed will. Let us see: Christ sanctions the Old Testament as a revelation of himself. His diety and sacrifice for sin are bound up in it. Strike the supernatural out of the Bible, and the diety of Christ, and consequently his work as a sacrifice for the world go with the supernatural.

This is not the discussion of the various theories of inspiration held by evangelical men. That is one thing. The definition of inspiration under discussion—Rev. H. F. Waring's definition—makes the Bible of human origin—it is not God's revelation. The "issue," which "the denomination must face," is, whether the Bible was written by men inspired by the Holy Spirit or by men of genius and learning. It is Bible or no Bible.

Brother Waring's views of the Bible, thus far given, are that it is of human production. Unitarians hold this ground, but they carry it to its logical issue. They see that it strikes out the Godhead, the sacrifice for sin and the atonement of Christ. They therefore deny that the Bible teaches these doctrines. What will Brother Waring do? Stay where he is, or come out and proclaim the whole truth of the Bible, as the only revelation from God, written by men elected and inspired by the Holy Ghost? By all means let us hope, yea believe, that he will swing into harmony with his brethren, and no longer condescend the denomination and obstruct and limit his own usefulness.

THIS DISCUSSION NOT LOCAL.

Let it here be known that the discussion of this subject is not confined to the MESSENGER AND VISITOR. It is world-wide. No religious question so engages the attention of the religious public on both sides of the Atlantic to-day as this does. Rev. Principal Sheraton, D. D., LL. D., of Toronto says:—"Do Christian people know what is at stake in the present controversy? 'We are fighting for all,' said Athanasius when, almost single-handed, he maintained against the Arians the true and real Godhead of Jesus Christ. And we too, are fighting for our all. For consider, if it be granted that the principles and methods of the Higher Critics are valid, what must follow? The principles applied to the Old Testament, must logically be applied to the New. . . ."

Doctor Robert Nichol says of Doctor Cheyne, the editor of the Encyclopædia Biblica that, "A mind so eager, so acute so versatile and so laborious as his, must perhaps have felt it a positive necessity to apply to the New Testament, the methods he had followed in the Old." He did so logically and consistently and with what results, the Encyclopædia Biblica shows. What has it left us but a wreck of the New Testament and a shadow of Christ?"

"If faith in the Bible as the Inspired and authoritative record of God's revelation of redemption is undermined, what truth of the Christian religion shall we be able to retain? And it is not doctrine only that will go; it is character, it is all that makes us great as a people."

Bishop Westcott said:—"Nothing less than our national character is at stake in our regard for the Bible."

"What then," says Doctor Sheraton, "can we do in this time of disquietude and drift? The practical remedy for the present distress is the inculcation and cultivation of earnest, prayerful, systematic study of God's Word. The great thing is not what men say about the Bible, but what the Bible says about itself. Let our study, of it be thorough and searching. Let us bring to bear upon it every literary and grammatical help. But above all, we need the guidance and enlightenment of the Holy Spirit; for as, Doctor Robertson Nichol has emphatically said:—"The Word of God cannot be understood by those who have no spiritual fellowship with the writers." Nothing is understood in the New Testament or in the Old without direct spiritual illumination.

THE AMERICAN BIBLE LEAGUE.

More than the above, and of more significance is what took place in New York on the second and third of May. What was it? A meeting of the friends of the Bible was held and the American Bible League was organized. A wealthy railroad man and manufacturer presided. Who were the men who came together to discuss this great subject?—a few "traditionalists," as the new critics jauntily call the men who regard the Bible as an infallible revelation of God's will to man? Let us see who they were; Princeton Theological Seminary—the seminary of the Hodges—was represented by its president, Doctor Francis L. Patton and Professor Robert D. Wilson, Oberlin Theological Seminary, too, had a representative present—Professor G. F. Wright; Newton Theological Seminary also was present by its representative, Doctor Jesse B. Thomas, Rochester Theological Seminary was represented by Doctor Howard Osgood. Among the speakers were Mr. Hall the president of the League, Doctor D. S. Gregory, Doctor Patton, Doctor D. J. Burrell; Doctor Robert R. Booth an ex-moderator of the Presbyterian General Assembly, Doctor George C. Lorimer, Doctor W. T. Sabine Bishop of the Reformed Episcopal church, Professor G. F. Wright and Doctor J. B. Thomas.

These are the solid men who left their work to meet together to oppose with their talent, learning and loyalty such speculations as are now exploited in some of the pulpits of Canada and the United States. Their work as the editor of the Examiner says: "is for the defence of the Word of God

against the insidious, critical assaults that are being made upon it by some who are its professional friends, and by others who are its open enemies." Mark the words of the editor—"insidious attacks of professed friends"—the worst kind of enemies.

Secretary Gregory said "the league, stands for the Bible as the Word of God and the only authoritative rule of faith and conduct." "A good Baptist definition by the way," says the editor or the Examiner.

Like Doctor Sheraton, the secretary said the League, "came into existence in recognition of the fact that the present death grapple between faith and disbelief, centres in the Bible; and involves the question of Bible or no Bible." He then said that, "the Bible, as an authoritative revelation of God, had been displaced by an unjustifiable literary and critical method, that assumes that the Bible is mere literature, originating like the literature of Babylon, Greece and Rome in legend and myth." He further said that the League, takes its stand for the Bible and the old view; and yet with open vision for any new light, and it challenges the claims of the radical criticism, the baselessness of which it proposes to show. "We have," he declared, "no fault to find with real criticism. We do not challenge the new views because they are scientific, because they are not scientific."

Professor Robert E. Wilson said:—"The only way in which the conservative party can maintain its position in the field of Biblical criticism is by showing that the premises of the radical critics are false; by showing through the more thorough investigation of the facts, that the foundations upon which the magnificent structures of the critics rest are indeed groundless, unscientific and illogical, unproved and often incapable of proof."

Professor R. W. Weidner of the Evangelical Lutheran Seminary at Chicago said:—"The Higher Critics who denied a supernatural origin for Christianity had never read the New Testament understanding the spirit in which the apostles wrote."

Doctor Howard Osgood recounted the points advanced by modern critics, and showed them to be identical with those made by Thomas Paine in his "Age of Reason," published in 1792. Thomas Paineism then as Dr. Osgood shows, is the radical higher criticism of our day.

From the above it may be learned that the discussion into which I have been driven by the force of circumstances is neither local nor personal. It is vital. The Bible the foundation of our civilization, of our social life, of our churches, the light to our feet, the lamp to our paths, in which we find our way to God, is at stake. We neither need nor do we want any ridiculous working hypotheses for going into all the world with the Gospel of the Son of God. We have the old Bible, used for this purpose for two thousand years. No substitutes are required. Rationalistic expedients are a snare and a delusion.

The American Bible League passed a resolution in favor of carrying its work into every town and city of the United States and Canada.

Any person who wishes to communicate with "The American Bible League," can do so by writing Rev. Daniel S. Gregory, D. D., 82 Bible House, New York City.

Influence and Power.

BY REV. A. C. DIXON, D. D.

If the Lord will help me I will pass on the blessing He gave me once when he gave me the distinction between influence and power. If you forget everything else, I shall be glad if you remember this. Oh, the day—I shall never forget it. I was pastor of a little church in the vicinity of the University of North Carolina. I was preaching every evening in a series of meetings, and the students of the University came to church in large numbers. The devil got into them and when the devil gets into a lot of university students, it is one of the biggest devils in the world. The brightest boys in the whole school worked for the destruction of that meeting. I roomed then up in the college building. As I went through the campus I could hear my voice coming from behind a tree; a mimic among the boys would quote my sermon of the night before, and it was said to be in exact imitation of the very tone. As I passed a window I could hear a prayer and an invitation to rise and come forward, and then a great roar of laughter would come from a hundred voices. I just began to feel that I was whipped. I had used the Bible the best I could. I had used poetry, rehortic, logic everything to reach those boys, and they seemed to get worse and worse.

After a restless night I picked up my Bible—I didn't go to breakfast—and went to the woods. I can see the old gray rock where I sat with my Bible open before me, and I prayed to God to show me what was the matter. I didn't go to lunch; don't think I took a mouthful that day. I went back to the study in the college, feeling just as sure that God would bless us that night as that he lived. There came upon me such a feeling of helplessness, I prayed: "Oh God will thou undertake to save these fellows for the sake of Jesus?"

I went down to the church meaning to give them God's word and trust to God Almighty to save those boys. They listened quietly, and at the close of the talk, for it was not a set service, I asked them if they would receive Jesus?