

THE DIVINE SOURCE OF THE BIBLE.

The Church of Jesus Christ stands or falls with the divine authority of the Holy Scriptures. If the Bible is but a collection of fables the Church rests upon the sand. If it is the revealed Word of God it is founded upon the rock. "No prophesy ever came by the will of man; but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit." Peter lived close enough to his Lord and Master to know that the revelation of God to men was no legend. He had the advantage of many wisecracks of today; he knew what he was talking about; and his testimony is: "For we did not follow cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eye-witnesses of his majesty." He tells of the honor and glory which Christ received from God the Father, "when there was borne such a voice to him by the Majestic Glory. This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Then, as if to make the declaration more emphatic, he says: "And this voice we ourselves heard borne out of heaven when we were with him in the holy mount." (2 Pet. 1:18). To Peter and these "holy men of old" there was no question whatever about the authority or source of the Bible. It did not come "by the will of man." Men are not seeking revelations from heaven. The majority of men do not want them, for the reason that heaven's will and man's will are out of harmony. Man wants the pleasures and excitements of sin. Heaven demands purity of life, and the teaching of the Bible is one of the best evidences that it is of God and not of man.

David knew that the Word of God was true; he felt it in those communings of his when his soul flowed out in the sweet and tender pathos of the Psalms. Among the last utterances of this man who lived near to the heart of God was this emphatic declaration: "The Spirit of Jehovah spake by me, and his word was upon my tongue." (2 Sam. 23:2). In the prophecy of Zacharias (Luke 2:67-79), we are told that the Lord, the God of Israel, "spake by the mouth of his holy prophets that have been from of old." Peter tells us that "the Holy Spirit spake before by the mouth of David, etc. (Acts 1:16). Again in referring to the sufferings of Christ he says: "The things which God foreshowed by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ should suffer, he thus fulfilled" (Acts 3:18). The source of the prophets' authority was not tradition, or legend or folk lore, but God. "Holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Paul in his second letter to Timothy says: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God."

These declarations are certainly explicit. They teach us that God was the source of the Bible. Our Book is not man-made; it is heaven-inspired. It is the revelation of the Great Jehovah, before whom all must finally appear. The Bible is God's letter to humanity. It expresses his desire concerning the beings he has made in his own image, whom he has redeemed through the sacrifice of his own Son. He has here written the things he wants us to know between birth and death; the things that will help us to live as the heirs of God should live. Since we are to dwell with him forever, he would have us fitted for such a glorious abode; and we could not be prepared to dwell with God, unless we knew what God expects of us. Nor could we dwell aright with each other unless we were acquainted with the great purposes of life. This we could only know by just such a revelation of God of our own needs and destiny, as has here been given.

The revelation of the will of God to man was just as necessary as the giving of his Son. It was not enough that Christ should die. Men must know that he died, and why he died. This knowledge must be recorded by infallible men and transmitted to all gen-

erations. Not only the events concerning his death but the history of God's dealing with his people both before and after that supreme event. The source of this revelation must be an authoritative one, otherwise the revelation itself will be faulty, and if faulty cannot be relied upon. He who cuts himself loose from a divinely-inspired Bible, cuts the cords which bind him to fellowship with God. Without an authoritative guide, every man would become a law unto himself. There would be no ultimate appeal. An inspired Bible is therefore an absolute necessity, otherwise the human race is at sea without a chart or compass, and no man can tell toward what port he is steering or on what shore he will land.—United Presbyterian.

A LESSON FROM THE CAMEL.

The camel, at the close of day,
Kneels down upon the sandy plain,
To have his burden lifted off
And rest to gain.

My soul, thou, too, shouldst to thy knees
When daylight draweth to a close,
And let thy master lift the load
And grant repose.

Else how couldst thou to-morrow meet,
With all to-morrow's work to do,
If thou thy burden all the night
Didst carry through?

The camel kneels at break of day
To have his guide replace his load;
Then rises up anew to take
The desert road.

So thou shouldst kneel at morning's dawn
That God may give thee daily care,
Assured that He no load too great
Will make thee bear.

A FREE GOSPEL.

A sweet-spirited woman said to me. "My dear old father always preached a free gospel. He preached for thirty years to the churches in his county and I doubt that he was ever paid as much as twenty-five dollars a year. He never asked the people to pay him anything. He owned a farm and made his living by hard work on that."

And when he died the churches he had served so long almost died. The well-to-do farmers were abundantly able to pay a preacher well for his whole time. But they had never been trained to do it. They soon starved out the preachers who came to them. These preachers didn't own farms. And the churches almost starved before they learned to pay for ministerial service.

I knew a preacher with a good income who preached regularly to a congregation and collected his salary as though he were dependent on it for a living. But he gave every cent of it to his board of missions.

That was right. It was not a missionary church and ought not be treated as such. To give them preaching would ruin them. And a "free gospel" will spoil any people who are able to pay.

Insist on your people paying you what they agree to pay, a reasonable compensation for your work. Give them information about the eight boards of the General Assembly, and insist on their contributing to them all. It will help them.

Don't let your people cultivate a sense of poverty. It will hurt them, hurt you, hurt the pastor who follows you, hurt the cause of Christ. You do wrong in giving them what they need to pay for.—Snap shots by a Passing Preacher in Cumberland Presbyterian.

The good of yesterday should grow into better to-day, the best always belongs to to-morrow.

The danger before the church these days is that it will have more machinery than engineers. Organizations seem, in many cases, only a poor kind of a screen to conceal indolence.

MISSIONARY POCKET BOOKS.*

By Rev. Robert E. Spear.

The consistent teaching of the New Testament is that we do not belong to ourselves. Nothing could be plainer than the language which it uses. "Ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price; glorify God therefore in your body." It is true that we are told also, "All things are yours," but that is merely to lead us to a still greater truth, namely, that we and all the things which are ours are not our own at all. "And ye are Christ's." We acknowledge this when we sing, "I am Thine, O Christ" and "Yes, Thou hast bought me, I am not my own. Tenderly, sweetly, Thy love has taught

I am Thine, Thine alone."

This is not meant to be poetry merely. It is the solemn and fundamental fact of life. We and all that we have are Christ's.

This includes our pocketbooks. It includes our money because it is one of the "all things" which are ours, and therefore Christ's. His ownership is not partial. There are not certain possessions of ours which are exempt from it. Our money is his because it is one of our possessions, and they are all his. He recognizes no heathen distinction between sacred and secular which acknowledges his ownership of the sacred and claims our ownership of the secular. Even if we were such a distinction made, money would be one of the sacred things. There is nothing more sacred than life, and what is money but life? Some one's life is in all the money we have. Men dug the ore, men turned it into metal, men coined it. And money is a small part of our wealth. But all our wealth represents life blood spent to create it. All life, and all that life gets or makes or becomes is God's.

And how much of our money is God's? He has as much right to all parts of it as to any part of it. How much of ourselves is God's? Down to our waists, or one side of us? What foolishness! We are all God's. All of each of us is God's. Well, just so there is no division of our possessions which allows God so much and keeps the rest. God would get more than he does from some people if there were such a division, for they are now claiming all as their own. But no one has a right to use anything except as a steward and trustee of God, to whom we and all that we have belong. All our deeds and words and spendings are to be as in his sight and service.

But experience and reason alike teach us that something more is needed than the acknowledgment of the general principle that we belong to God. The Jew belonged to God, and he gave much to God's service, but beside all this he was enjoined to bring his tithe. We need some such simple device to make the general principle operative, to keep us in memory of it, and to make sure that we will not be so generally pious that we are not particularly pious at all. The religion is suspicious which avoids the Sabbath and the tithe on the ground that God owns all our time and money. He does, and he will own them more, and not less, if we set aside a seventh of one and a tenth of the other in an exceptional sense.

If we do, the missionary pocketbooks will be full. Missions at home and abroad do not require such vast sums. A very moderate regular contribution from each Christian would give them all they need. A tithe of the tithe would provide all that they require.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.

Mon.—The one giver (Psa. 104: 14-30. Rom. 8:32).

Tues.—Generous gifts (Exod. 36: 1-7).

Wed.—A prophet's appeal (Hag. 1: 3-19).

Thurs.—An emptied pocketbook (Phil. 2: 6-8).

Fri.—A closed book (Mal. 1: 6-14).

Sat.—A man's best gift (Rom. 12: 1, 2).

* Y. P. Topic, Sunday, June 27, 1920.—Missionary Pocketbooks (2 Cor. 8: 1-5).