

More About the Bible.

BY E. M. SAUNDERS, D. D.
INTRODUCTORY.

Everything has been frank, fair and honorable, as far as I am concerned. A member of the Bible class asked the pastor, if it would be a fair interpretation of his views of the Bible, to give the Bible to a man, and say to him a part of that book is inspired and a part is not inspired. Take it, cast aside what you judge uninspired, and with what remains settle your relations with God.

As we in old times said of the flint locks, the pastor hung fire. A D. C. L. present a man used to courts of law said, "that is a fair question." The pastor replied, "I will answer it at another time." Three weeks after this, in the last minutes of discussing the methods of Bible study, he dictated for the class to write the answer to the question, "What is the inspiration of the Bible?" He dictated no more. That definition I sent to representative ministers, asking their opinions. I told the pastor I did so. I gave him the names of the men to whom I had written, and told him they had agreed with him. He had no fault to find with my course. But the pages of the MESSENGER and VISITOR must not be enumbered with endless explanations.

However, I still adhere to my first estimate of Brother Waring, although in his last letters he has heavily taxed my confident belief, but this shall be regarded as a black, fugitive cloud passing over the face of a bright serene moon.

The pastor might have saved himself the writing of four long letters by simply saying, "I believe the Bible is a book given to the world by God, and was written by men supernaturally inspired by God to write it." This or a like declaration, as far as I know, he has never made. Three sermons and a long discussion in the Bible class I have had all professing for the purpose of teaching the denomination the right views of the "Bible inspired," and how it should be studied, and strange to say the pastor's own views have been studiously concealed, while the tendency of his questions and general statements has been to unsettle the minds of the people in the Bible as the inspired Word of God.

I have carefully listened to all the pastor has said, but no plain statement of his belief in the Bible, as supernatural revelation, has ever fallen upon my ears. Most carefully have I read all he has written on the subject, even seeking with care in the links and loops and general enigmatisms of his long and involved sentences, for an explicit statement that, in his belief, the Bible is a supernatural revelation of God to man, but all in vain. No declaration of this character can be found in any of the pastor's utterances.

As it was in the three sermons in the church and the sermon at the convention, so it was in the Bible class. When a venerable deacon in the class, in great distress of mind, asked his pastor, "Is the Bible the Word of God?" no reply was given. The pastor will remember that I tarried after the class was dismissed, and kindly told him he should answer the deacon's questions—that all professors in theological schools frankly told their students what they believed. The pastor will remember that he said, if he were a teacher in a theological school, he also would give his classes his own views. But he continued to conceal his belief from the class. I am conscious that these statements will be read by members of the class—lawyers, merchants, a large number of intelligent men and women.

AMBIGUITY REMOVED.

Mr. Waring seems to think his methods of Bible study have been opposed by Dr. Saunders, which in part are: (a) Getting the meaning the authors intended to convey; (b) Getting and arranging historically the facts in and back of the author's thoughts; (c) Getting the truths in and back of their thoughts.

Not publicly, not privately have I said or written one word against any method of Bible study. Sam Butler says, "No argument like matter of fact is here then are the facts." As Brother Waring has repeated the statement so often by lip and by pen, I am coming to think that he, as a victim of an oft-repeated caprice, is led to believe it true. Now for the facts. For nearly fifty years I have studied Biblical theology. But little time has systematized theology got out of me. T. H. Rand and I, when students, with our paragon Bible, began the study of the Bible book by book. At Newton, Dr. Hackett's impatience with systematic theology, and his unsurpassed skill in the examination of the Bible, taking a book at a time, holding it up in the light of contemporary history, in the light of the character and aim of the writer, the prevailing prejudices, racial and religious, wholly captivated me. Added to this, was the keen, thorough examination of the text in the original language. That was license in method sufficient to satisfy any infidel. I have never narrowed it. But I look to the Holy Spirit as the great Teacher of spiritual truth. Young men in my Bible class of about one hundred at Berwick, could rise and from memory recite Paul's missionary journeys and stand an examination in relating them to Geography and History. After reading the twelve volumes of Grote's History of Greece and other literature, I gave in the light of this reading, a lecture on Paul's speech on Mars Hill. The book of Job also was the subject of

sermons and a lecture, as were other books, also the lives of distinguished men of the Bible. In these studies every light possible to me was turned upon these Scriptures. In Job, for instance, the time of its production, the family, social, and religious life, the hints at the habits and industries of the people; the literature and poetry of the book, were not overlooked in our humble efforts. Some young people encouraged me in my work by telling me that after hearing the lecture on Job, given in different parts of the Province, they spent the night in reading the book. In Cornwallis and in Halifax, the Genesis, the Romans, the Hebrews have been studied in this way. Many years ago, when calling attention to the Messiah and the Messianic prophecy of the Old Testament in some sermons at Fredericton, the Rev. W. E. McIntyre, one of our ablest and most appreciative men was good enough to encourage me by telling me that the sermons were a help to him. I may say too, that I have used mostly German commentaries, because they are so free and patient in turning every light upon the text of the Bible. If Mr. Waring will look in the College records of June, 1881, he will find there a resolution introduced by E. M. Saunders, and seconded by Dr. T. H. Rand, and carried unanimously by the Board of Governors, that the Bible be introduced as a subject of study into the curriculum of the College. Acadia College was, as far as I know, the first college in America to introduce the Bible into its course of study. One of the arguments I used was, that the history of the Scriptures should be woven into the course of ancient history taught in the college; and that for the purpose of giving the students the advantage of studying the Scriptures historically. Here is the germ of the conservative higher criticism. Now, I hope this will disillusion Brother Waring and save him the trouble of further pelting an image of straw. Use any methods you like, thought of or unthought of, but be you sure of this; the typical Baptist will reserve to himself the right to review both your methods and your results.

This disposed of, let me now turn to the real question, "Does Mr. Waring teach that the Bible is a supernatural revelation from God, given through men supernaturally inspired for their work—the only supernatural revelation given to the world by God?" This is the question, and a bad one it is, too.

THE OCCASION OF MY WRITING.

No minister could wish for a reception more hearty than the grand old First Church gave to its pastor in January, 1903. It was an occasion brimful of joy. The cup was running over. Include me, please, in this statement. For seven months there was comfort. Then came the three sermons on "The Bible inspired." Discerning minds were filled with apprehensions, and carried to their homes heavy hearts. It was mildly suggested to the pastor, that it was a risky and perilous thing to attempt to unsettle the essential beliefs of the church and denomination.

Then came that hour of agony in the Convention. And what an hour it was. Never anything like it before in the life of the Convention. Heads went down, ministers left the house, old and young. Some wondered, others groaned. The house was sown thick with distrust. All hearts ached because the customary vote of thanks could not be passed by the Convention, coupled with a request for the publication of the sermon in the MESSENGER and VISITOR. The enterprising reporters failed to get satisfaction. All loved Brother Waring and love him still. Hope bore up all hearts that he would, on reflection, recede from the dangerous ground taken. He received faithful admonitions from his brethren. After this, the subject of inspiration was again raised by him and discussed in the Bible class; and in this discussion Brother Waring said repeatedly that "the denomination must face the issue." I then decided it was my duty to take my part in "facing the issue"; consequently my lecture followed, and in a revised form, appeared in the MESSENGER and VISITOR.

THE OBJECT OF MY WRITING.

My purpose in writing was to turn the attention of the denomination to the Bible, as containing a revelation from God, on which rests our faith and practice; to prepare the mind of the body for the further discussion of the subject of inspiration by the pastor of the First Halifax church; to help by suggestion and otherwise any brethren who might need help. Had Brother Waring been satisfied with his three sermons in Halifax and the hour in the Convention, not a line, in my opinion, would have been written on the subject. All would have assumed that the suppressed storm of dissent in the Convention, had led him to reconsider his views, and to quietly get into harmony with the denomination. It was the pastor's persisting in forcing his views on the denomination that drove me, much against my inclinations, to oppose, as far as I could, his evident plan to have the old view of the Bible give place to the evolution theory of the Higher Criticism, to the Unitarian theory. This is evidently the ground Mr. Waring occupies, and which he would have the denomination occupy.

AN ADMISSION.

Mr. Waring, in effect, says that I approach the Bible as true; and that he approaches it as neither true nor untrue; that I hold it innocent until it is proved guilty; that he holds it guilty (it must be that there is no middle ground) until it is proved innocent. In this way we are opposed at

the outset in its examination. Well, this is no method, it is a condition. I accept the position he assigns to us respectively. The great Hebrew and Roman codes of jurisprudence, and all the codes of the civilized nations of today are emphatic in regarding every man innocent, in the eye of the law, until his guilt is proved by evidence, thoroughly sifted. If fallible man is by law held innocent until his guilt is proved, I feel bound to stand by the Bible—God's word—as innocent until it is proved guilty. Mr. Waring may approach the Bible as untrue. I shall continue my examination of it as God's Word. If it is proved to my satisfaction that it is a human, fallible book, I will give it up; if not, and may I be pardoned for the suggested possibility of human authorship, then I shall stand by it.

After all that the Bible has done for the millions in Heaven and on earth; after all it has done for the world, am I asked to regard it as a collection of myths, legends, fables, and idealistic notions of brilliant minds, and this, too, declared to be smeared with vulgarities? Am I required to sit down with these Philistines and say to them, that if they will suspend their judgment that the Bible is a fraud, I will suspend my judgment that it is the infallible word of an infallible God, and on these conditions we will study it together? Never, NEVER, NEVER.

Twelve sons sit around their aged mother, beautiful in the simplicity of old age. There she is, her sweet face radiant looking upon her manly sons for whom she has made every sacrifice. Then one of them says, there are some people who say our good mother is bad. Let us gather them in, and, if they will suspend their judgment, we will suspend ours; and we will have an examination. An indignant protest is in the eyes and faces of the eleven brothers. They say to the twelfth brother, your proposition is a fiction as cold as a block of ice from the North Pole. Search the Old Testament. Did Jehovah tell the prophets to go to the surrounding nations with this cold-blooded proposition? Tell all, small and great that the Bible is the Word of God, which commands all men everywhere to repent, or they shall all likewise perish.

"For evangelical purposes," the Parliament of Religions was useless. Ten years have shown that no good effect was produced by it in heathen lands. Paul and our missionaries denounce the superstitions of the heathen, and admit any truth they hold, while holding up to them the gospel system; but to do this, one thing and to sit down with the heathen as these Higher Critics would have the missionaries do, and admit that our Bible is myth, legend and literature evolved from the brains of "Hebrews, Jews and early Christians," is quite another thing. In teaching a Sabbath School class of Chinese in California, a young lady gave the class an account of Jonah. The Orientals matched it with a Chinese miracle, that pu' Jonah in the shade. But, if Brother Waring can get any comfort from his grotesque scheme for popular use, nobody will wish to rob him of his enjoyment.

DR. SAUNDERS "BLOCKED" THE WORK OF THE BIBLE CLASS.

Well, I confess I asked some questions and with the result of a question asked by an old deacon. The colored preacher had graphically described the making of Adam. The Lord moulded him, head, arms, body and legs out of clay; and then stood him up against the fence to dry. "Who made dat fence?" inquired the old deacon, jumping to his feet. "Sit down brudder, sich questions spiles my theology."

Well, brother Waring thinks I have "hit" him, also another good brother. For this I am sorry. Every brother in the ministry, I would help, not "hit." This is my apology. In the last six months, I have been shooting at the radical critics, who in their, "winter palaces," before a good fire have been penknifing the Bible. If Brother Waring and the other brother have been standing too near these people, they may have been hit. My advice to them is the advice of the Quaker on the stage in the play of Uncle Tom's Cabin, standing in all gravity with gun in hand, the Quaker, seeing the slave-hunter on Eliza's track, and brings his gun to his shoulder and says to Eliza's pursuer "I advise thee to remove from the place thou now occupiest, for I am going to fire just where thou standest."

These "hits" have driven my brother to his "knees." Well, the more we do of that, the better; but perhaps it should not be published. However, I see slim chance here for martyrdom; but if any, pinch-beck cheap.

(continued next week.)

St. John Letter.

The time flies, and it has already been some weeks since a report of the workings of the churches in this city has appeared in the MESSENGER and VISITOR. As a city we have been wrestling with civic and religious problems for of small calibre. We are trying to get ready for the summer opening for the Grand Trunk Railroad now projected, and if it fails to come this summer to be ready for it when it does come. A strong committee is making arrangements for the Champlain Tercentenary to be held here this summer. Dr. Raymond, pastor of St. Mary's Church, (Epis.) has written an extended history of the discovery of the St. John River, and from that we find that we have been in this country three hundred years. One important feature of this celebration, which will be marked by aquatic, athletic, trades, and other celebrations, will be an Old Home Week