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"Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit."

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Poetry.

Nothing is lost.

Where is the snow?
'Tis not long ago
It covered the earth with a veil of white;
We heard not its footsteps soft and light,
Yet there it was in the morning bright;
Now it hath vanished away from sight.
Not a trace remains
In fields or lanes.

Where is the frost?
They are gone and lost—
The forms of beauty last night it made.
With pictures rare were windows arrayed;
"Be silent," it said; the brook obeyed.
Yet silence and pictures all did fade.
At the smile of the sun
All was undone.

Where is the rain?
Patting it came,
Dancing along with a merry sound.
A grassy bed in the fields it found;
Each drop came on the roof with a bound.
Where is the rain? It hath left the ground.
What good hath it done,
Gone away so soon?

Ever, ever
Our best endeavor
Seemeth to fall like the melted snow.
We work out our thoughts wisely and slow;
The seed we sow, but it will not grow.
Our hopes, our resolves—where do they go?
What doth remain?
Memory and pain.

Nothing is lost—
No snow nor frost
That come to enrich the earth again.
We thank them when the ripening grain
Is waving over the hill and plain,
And the pleasant rain springs from earth again.
All endeth in good—
Water and food.

Never despair:
Disappointment bear.
Though hope seemeth vain, be patient still;
Thy good intents God doth fulfil.
Thy hand is weak; His powerful will
Is finishing thy life-work still.
The good endeavor
Is lost—ah! never.

—Christian Treasury.

Religious.

[From the London Baptist Magazine.]

THOUGHTS ON INSPIRATION.

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(Concluded.)

Man is exceedingly fond of framing plans for God, and prescribing to Him modes of action. He even affects to wonder that His methods of procedure have not been adopted. The construction of the divine law-book of Christianity does not please him. He would have shaped it differently. It would have come forth in all the regular, formal proportions of a system, wherein each topic might be found in its own place, and nowhere else; history, doctrine, discipline, morals, prophecy, each occupying its several niche. It is very strange to him that we should have four separate narratives of the Saviour's life—a fragmentary account of the first planting of Christianity—twenty-one epistles, some to churches, some to individuals—and one book of obscure visions and prophecies. He is confounded at the apparent want of order, and deems a very extraordinary that it should be necessary to go through such a process of comparison and disentanglement of passages in order to exhibit separately and distinctly the various parts of the divine system. Oh, how often has it proved that "the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God." It has pleased Him that the truths of Christianity should be interwoven with exhortations and precepts rather than systematically discussed, and that they should sometimes seem to be but incidentally introduced; but we ought not to doubt that this is the most useful manner in which they could be presented, and that there is great advantage in seeing how they are applied to practical pur-

poses. God's way of working out the great problem of inspiration must unquestionably be the best.

The brevity of the sacred historians is very remarkable. How much of our Lord's history, for instance, has been suppressed! Have we not often longed for more of His discourses and for a fuller narrative of His life? "Many other signs, truly," says the Apostle John, "did Jesus in the presence of His disciples which are not written in this book." (John xx. 30.) Why were they not written? The historians must have known a great deal more than they have told; and besides, it was promised that the Holy Spirit would "bring all things to their remembrance." Why, then, have they not been recorded? Did not the writers desire to record them? Were they not anxious that all the "gracious words" and benevolent, holy deeds of the Lord Jesus should be amply detailed and set forth? How was it that they used such compression, and omitted so much? There is only one way, it seems to me, of accounting for this strange phenomenon. They wrote under restraint. As on one occasion Paul and his companions "assayed to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit suffered them not" (Acts xvi. 7), so, when the authors of the New Testament sat down to commit to writing the wonderful story of redemption, they were supernaturally prevented from giving the copious details which they possessed. The book would have been much larger if man had his will in compiling it. But it is of God's making. We have the amount of information which it has pleased Him to communicate. And thus the very fact that so much has been left out serves to show that the writers were "moved by the Holy Ghost."

Another extraordinary circumstance may be mentioned. Peter was chosen to introduce the gospel both to the Jews and the Gentiles. He stood high among his brethren, as he had been the first of the "first three" in the days of the Saviour. But after the meeting at Jerusalem (Acts xv.), improperly called a "Council," we hear no more of him, save that he wrote one of his letters from "Babylon." And when the divine book was to be prepared, his share in it did not amount to one-twelfth part of the Apostle Paul's. What shall we say to this? There may be various methods of explaining it; but for my part I cannot help supposing that it is to be traced to the divine foreknowledge of the power and authority which could be in later ages ascribed to Peter. It was determined beforehand that the sacred book should contain nothing which could warrant such assumptions. Those who plead for Peter's supremacy cannot find it in the New Testament. If any Apostle appears to be the head of Christianity, it is not Peter, but Paul. No one but Paul ventured to say, "So ordain I in all Churches." (See 1 Cor. iv. 17; vii. 17; 2 Cor. xi. 28.)

The preceding observations relate chiefly to the external proofs of the inspiration of the Scriptures. The internal proofs are no less strikingly convincing.

There is a peculiarity in the style of the sacred writers which it is difficult to characterize. Perhaps we cannot do better than say again that they wrote as men who were "moved by the Holy Ghost." Under that influence even their historical memorials assumed a more than human form. No others would have written of miracles as they did. No wonder is expressed. There is no effort to direct the attention of the reader. A miraculous cure is narrated with the same calmness and precision as a journey from one place to another. And if from the historical we proceed to the epistolary, we meet with still more marked manifestations of what may be called the heavenly style of writing. Those letters were written by men who were conscious of power. There is a majesty, a condensed richness of thought, a fulness of meaning, indicating an acquaintance with the "secret things" of the Most High, and a commanding tone and manner which no good man would assume, unless he felt that he could employ the phraseology of inspiration—"Thus saith the Lord."

The contrast between the writers of the New Testament and the Christian authors of the first two centuries, their immediate successors, is particularly worthy of observation. The descent from Paul, Peter, and John, to Clemens Romanus, Ignatius, &c., is most re-

markable. It is just the difference between mature thought and childish triviality—between a golden and a leaden age—between heaven and earth.

Look also at the antecedents of these writers. They were all Jews, originally narrow-minded, bigoted, proud of their exclusive privileges, holding the Gentiles in contempt. In all these respects the Apostle Paul stood pre-eminent. Judaism was intensified in him. Examine now the system of Christian truth as set forth in the apostolic epistles. What spirit-stirring, benign revelations are before us! Earthly distinctions are lost sight of. The writers think no more of Jews and Gentiles, Greeks and Barbarians. It is man—simple man—ruined man—and all alike ruined. And the Church, as they view and describe it, is one body, composed of believers of all nations and classes, baptized into the same Spirit, all possessing equal rights, and "members one of another." Is there not here an utter abnegation of Jewish exclusiveness? Whence, too, did these men derive those wonderful truths, which they discuss with so much ease and familiarity? Who unveiled to them God's predestination—the justifying righteousness of the Lord Jesus—the glorious privileges of the adoption—the operation of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of believers—the mediatorial kingdom of the Redeemer, extending to all worlds, all beings, and all time—and the sublime, dread realities of the future state? Verily, these are "the things of the Spirit," which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have they entered into the heart of man;" but God revealed them unto these His servants, and they are now inscribed on the immortal page.

There is another consideration of no small moment. The system of the truth contained in the apostolic writings is unsusceptible of improvement or addition. There have been no discoveries in religion since that time. All philosophy has suffered change. Science alters every year; the theories of one age are exploded in the next; the text-books of fifty years ago are useless now. But Christianity is the same as when it came forth from its Founder. It was complete at the very first. Subsequent writers have expounded the works of the apostles, but they have added nothing to them.—So also of worship, government, and discipline. The example of the apostolic Churches and the directions given in the apostolic letters are all sufficient. Churches constituted and governed according to those examples and directions can exist in all countries, and flourish under every form of civil polity, and in every state of society. And the usefulness attending christian enterprise is always found to be proportioned to their conformity with New Testament patterns. Meddlesome men have interfered in this matter. The simplicity of apostolic arrangements displeased them. They must have more ceremony, more pomp, more power. Complicated liturgies were prepared—gaudy processions passed along the streets—new offices were created, new orders instituted—and fasts and feasts appointed in abundance. What followed? Withering—decay—corruption—death. Something has been done in the way of reform during the last three hundred years, but the majority of professing Christians still adhere to unscriptural politics. Where is Christianity now seen in its most vigorous development? Is it not in those communities which approach most nearly to the apostolic pattern? And must it not be regarded as a most marvellous thing that those Christian Jews should be able to devise a scheme which, though at variance with all the forms of religion then in vogue, and possessed of outward attractions, should upplant them all, and should be found, at the lapse of eighteen hundred years, to require no change, but to be still the best adapted means of securing the great spiritual purposes of Christianity? Can anything short of inspiration account for it?

Once more. Predictions have been referred to. Let the reader turn to 2 Thess. ii. 1-12, 1 Tim. iv. 1-3, 2 Tim. iii. 1-5. In those passages the Apostle Paul foretells the rise of a system, pretending to be religious, which would arrogate divine power and authority, would seek to enforce its claims by false miracles, would be characterized by apostasy from the Christian faith, and by demoralising tendencies; would establish creature worship,

and would enjoin observances at variance with the laws and arrangements of God. At the time of his writing the letters no one could have anticipated such a lamentable result. All probability was against it. But history has interpreted the prophecy; and Paul takes his place among the prophets. Peter stands by his side. (See 2 Peter iii.) And there, too, enshrouded in mysterious glory, is the beloved disciple.

Although many facts and arguments remain unnoticed, the space already occupied warns me to bring these remarks to a close. I trust that those who peruse them will be convinced that we are not only justified but imperatively required to regard the Bible as the production of inspired men, and therefore claiming our submission and obedience. Besides this—every Christian "hath the witness in himself." The Word of God speaks to his heart. Its soothing, consoling, sanctifying power proclaims the heavenly source from which it flows. It is his light in darkness, his guide in perplexity, his preservative in peril, his solace in tribulation. What could he do without his Bible?

"What is the world?—A wildering maze,
Where sin hath track'd ten thousand ways,
Her victims to ensnare;
All broad, and winding and aslope,
All tempting with perfidious hope,
All ending in despair.

"Millions of pilgrims throng those roads,
Bearing their bables, or their loads.
Down to eternal night;—
One humble path, that never bends,
Narrow, and rough, and steep, ascends:
From darkness into light.

"Is there a Guide to shew that path?
The Bible;—he alone, who hath
The Bible need not stray:
Yet he who hath, and will not give
That heavenly Guide to all that live,
Himself shall lose the way."

Are you in a strait?

It is possible that you are entangled in the meshes of a present difficulty, to the unravelment of which no clue presents itself, and from which there appears no way of escape. Human ingenuity is baffled, creature strength fails, all earthly means are exhausted, and you are at your wit's end. Behold your remedy; how near, how simple—Go and tell Jesus. Take your difficulty, and spread it before the Lord. Your appeal to his compassion, and your believing reliance upon his promise, will secure on your behalf infinite wisdom and omnipotent strength. Listen to the divine declaration, simple faith in which will raise you above your circumstances, "Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh; is anything too hard for me?" Then what is your present entanglement, great though it be, to Him, "with whom nothing is impossible?" In a moment, and by a way transcending all your thoughts and conceptions, he can "pluck your feet out of the net," and bring you into a "large place where there is no straitness." Pore not despondingly over your obstacles; faint not under your adversity; sit not down stunned and paralyzed upon the stones of difficulty, asking, "Who will roll it away?" Here is your effectual remedy; adopt it in faith, and you shall be delivered.—Go and tell Jesus.

Many members of temperance societies act as if they had discharged their whole duty by agreeing to abstain from the use of intoxicating liquors, whereas they have taken but one step. We protest against such a view of duty in this matter.

It is too selfish—too contracted—too narrow, savors too much of the spirit of gain to be admitted into the minds of those who profess to have the world's reformation for their object. The language of every temperance man should be—must be—will be, before the reform goes forth in triumph, "I have agreed to see that one individual shall not be a drunkard. How many others can I be the direct or indirect means of preventing from becoming drunkards?"

The light of Faith will never fade from the path of the christian, but will grow brighter and brighter, till it shall reach the maturity of perfect day.