

as true what another man is inspired to contradict as false. The Vedas, the Koran, and the Bible, it has been well remarked, cannot be inspired to contradict one another. The Vedas permit stealing; the Bible denounces theft. Are both these books inspired? If so, there is no such thing as truth; if so, then truth is simply what man imagine. There is no objective reality, if this theory be correct; there are only our subjective notions regarding what is real and true. It is not too much to affirm that if this theory were true, there is no God who is truth and who reveals truth. It is certain that this theory leads directly to atheism. It explains inspiration by virtually denying that there is any unicity in inspiration.

Another theory is known as the illumination theory. This theory holds, with the preceding, that inspiration is simply an increase of the illumination possessed, by every Christian. It does not regard the Bible as the Word of God, but simply as containing the Word of God. There is, of course, an element of truth in this theory. Error pure and simple could not long endure. It is the fibre of truth in false doctrines which holds them together sufficiently long to attract notice, and to receive a qualified approval. In judging this theory it ought to be borne in mind that, strictly speaking, the illumination of the Holy Spirit gives no new truth, but simply a more vivid, accurate, and vital apprehension of truth already revealed.

We come to what is known as the dictation theory. This theory has been held by many excellent Christian people; perhaps, indeed, most of those who are known as orthodox Christians, at some time in their lives, held this theory literally and tenaciously. It is sometimes characterized as the mechanical theory of inspiration. It holds that the Holy Spirit took such possession of the minds and bodies of the writers of Scripture that they became passive instruments, mere amanuenses, mere machines, under the power of the Spirit. Several writers, in opposing this theory, very properly make the distinction, that the writers of Scripture were not God's pens, but God's penmen. This is sometimes called the verbal theory of inspiration. Those who oppose this theory will not deny that there are instances when God spoke with an audible voice, and when the command was that His words be written as spoken. Daniel 4: 31; Acts 9: 5; Rev. 1: 10, 11, 19: 21: 5. But these examples are rare, they certainly were not God's invariable, or even usual, method of communicating His divine will. In favor of this theory is the view sometimes held that thought could not be suggested by the Spirit without the suggestion of actual words. It is also supported on the ground that it gives the authority of Scripture, in actual words, to the doctrines of revelation. Among the supporters of this rigid theory of verbal inspiration frequently known as the mechanical theory, were nearly all the Protestant theologians of the seventeenth century, and many especially among the English and Scotch in the eighteenth century; while in the nineteenth century such men as Carson, Haldane, Gattussen, and still others representing different countries. This theory is opposed because of the evident peculiarities observed in the inspired writings. There is manifestly a human element in the Bible. This element distinguishes one writer from another, and the variations in the accounts of the same transaction show the verbal inspiration was not the divine method. If there were no human element, and all Scripture writers were mere machines, there would be no idiosyncrasies in thought and expression.

We know that Milton dictated many of his poems to his daughters, and we know also that his style in "Paradise Lost" is the same whether he dictates to one daughter or to another. We know, on the contrary, that there is a marked difference between the styles of various Scripture writers. No careful student can fail to discover a difference between Hosea and Isaiah, between John and Paul, although the same Spirit suggested to each the heavenly thought he was to communicate. In reply to this objection, those who hold the mechanical view of inspiration declare that the Spirit accommodated himself to the peculiarities of the writers. That view is almost an impossible supposition, and granting that it were possible, it will not explain the divergencies of statement by different Scripture writers concerning the same facts. We know that there are four forms in which the inscription on the cross is given. If we compare the words of our Lord to

the disciples on the lake, we have a similar divergency in the forms of expression. It is to be further said that verbal inspiration is an expression not endorsed by the Scriptures themselves. Perhaps it is not too much to say that words as such are incapable of inspiration. Oral words consist of certain sounds, written words of certain marks; these sounds and marks are merely material signs, of which a spiritual element can scarcely be predicated. It used to be affirmed that we could not think without words, but a truer statement of mental processes now obtains. It is absolutely certain that children have thoughts before they have words. It will not be denied that dogs and other animals have some kind of dream or thought, although they are deprived of powers of speech. It is unfortunate that this theory of inspiration has been so earnestly held by many noble souls and true believers in the fact of inspiration. Critics in opposing the theory believed that they opposed the fact itself. In destroying the outpost, they considered that they captured the citadel. We all certainly are possessed of thoughts for which at the moment we have no adequate word. We often think of a friend's face when we are unable to call his name; and God's Spirit gives us thoughts too deep for utterance in any human language, both when we are addressing God in prayer, and our fellow men in testimony and exhortation. The theory of verbal inspiration is comparatively modern in origin. Strictly speaking the early fathers knew nothing of this theory. It is true that some of them, in employing the figure of a harp or lyre, have been considered by some modern critics as endorsing this theory. But that figure was not in general use, and it ought not to be too literally interpreted. Not until the seventeenth century did the idea of verbal inspiration become formulated into a theory. It has indeed been floating about loosely from mind to mind, long previous to that time. Calvinus fully set forth the verbal theory; later writers carried it so far as to apply it to the vowel points and to the various signs of punctuation. Perhaps some of the fathers, among whom were Justin Martyr and Athenagoras, held the mechanical and even the "mantic" theory. Both Irenaeus and Augustine speak of the apostles as writing what they remembered; and yet at times they seem to imply that the apostles were but the hands which wrote at Christ's dictation. Origen distinguished between the contents of Scripture and its language—in which latter mistakes might occur. He more than any other of the fathers discussed the nature of inspiration. Thomas Aquinas distinguishes between revelation and inspiration. He properly affirmed a progressive knowledge as writers came in thought and life nearer to Christ. It was left for Abelard to assert that prophets and apostles were not always free from error. The Reformers always emphasized the authority of Holy Scripture. This authority was not seriously questioned; the true inquiry was as to the meaning of Scripture. Luther recognized the Holy Spirit as the author of the Scriptures, but he admitted that human writers showed their peculiarities as they poured their whole heart into their words. Calvin's position in this regard was substantially that of Luther. Calvinus, as we have already seen, was the author of the theory which was long identified with Protestant orthodoxy. The phrase "plenary inspiration" is nowhere warranted by the Scriptures. Strictly speaking, Christ alone was plenary inspired, of all human beings.

(To be Continued.)

The Upham and Hammond Baptist Sunday School Convention.

Having closed our Summer School of Theology with an open door service, bidding President Townsend and other Pastors farewell we turned to our Sunday School Convention work.

SATURDAY AFTERNOON.

Opened with devotional service led by S. M. Floyd. Delegates enrolled. Words of welcome by Superintendent Pickle. All the schools reported, and very encouragingly. The officers for ensuing year elected were: President, R. M. Bynon; Vice Presidents, A. U. Pickle, W.

Pickle; Secretary, H. Floyd; Assistant Secretary, C. M. Ferguson; Executive Committee, S. Smith; H. Baird and W. Sherwood.

SUBJECTS DISCUSSED.

(a) Benefits to be derived from a Sunday School Convention, W. Wright.

(b) How a Baptist Sunday School Convention should be conducted, R. B. Smith.

(c) Who should not attend a Sunday School Convention? W. Pickle.

(d) Who should attend a Sunday School Convention, and why? F. Howe.

EVENING SESSION.

The evening session was largely devoted to Temperance. It was ably opened by W. Patterson. Other participants in the service were: R. M. Bynon, A. U. Pickle, A. Flowd, R. F. Smith, J. Bain, L. Floyd, L. Brown, R. Patterson, F. C. Wright, R. Howe and others. The speakers with one voice condemned the Government's ignoring of the Plebiscite and vowed to avenge its death.

SUNDAY MORNING SESSION.

Devotional service led by J. Sherwood, Recitation by W. Mallory. Kindergarten Lesson, H. Floyd, Sermon, R. B. Smith. The Session was well attended and very profitable.

AFTERNOON SESSION.

The Building was packed to the utmost capacity.

The following was the program: Short address on How to Conduct a Sunday School, W. C. Wright.

Model School opening. President, Teaching Model Lesson, R. B. Smith, Address to School, R. M. Bynon. Closing Model School, W. Pickle. Short programme by Poodiac School, Sermon, F. C. Wright.

EVENING SESSION.

Singing, Hillsdale Children, Recitation, F. Webster, Singing, Fairfield Children, Essay, The Model Teacher, S. M. Floyd, Recitation, G. Odell, Essay, Scriptural Proof for a Sunday School, E. Wanamaker,

Singing, Children, Essay, The Two Covenants, H. Floyd, Recitation, L. Brown, Essay, The Heavenly Home, J. Wanamaker, Address, R. M. Bynon,

In this meeting ten requested Prayers. Closing words by Bros. Smith and Wright. The Convention was well attended throughout and was highly gratifying and helpful, being characterized by the Holy Spirit's presence and power.

Fairfield.

July 17th, 1893.

Hannah H. Floyd, Secretary.

Following Christ.

"Follow Me!" is the Master's marching order. He left us an example, that we should "follow His steps," walking "even as He walked." Yet it is possible for us to miss the injunction and the example by fixing our attention too exclusively on the outward and the material. We might seek to imitate Christ in dress and manner and mode of living, and thus produce a caricature at once absurd and irreverent, if not blasphemous. He does not wish us to copy the manners and the pursuits of the first century, and to think that by such a burlesque we can honor Him or benefit our fellowmen. He wishes us to carry His spirit and aims and motives into the activities of our own generation and our own community, being men and women among our neighbors, in all their relations and pursuits. The Pharisees thought very much depended on the cut of the coat and the forms and ceremonies and conventionalities of their time, but Christ put the emphasis on other things. Whatever diverts attention from the inward, the permanent, the spiritual in Christ-