

The Home Mission Journal.

A record of Missionary, Sunday School and Colportage work. Published semi-monthly by the Committee of the Home Mission Board of New Brunswick.

All communications and subscriptions may be forwarded to:

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Terms, - - - 50 Cents a Year.

A Parable.

In a certain village there was a Joint Stock Company that established a business consisting of a store of general merchandise.

But their goods were not satisfactory to all the villagers. They complained of the quality, and of the prices of the goods, and often asked for better eatables and less patent medicines to be kept for sale. But the managers said, "ours is the only village store that has a right to do business here, and we will keep the kind of goods, and put them at such prices as will yield us the best profits." So after a long endurance of imposition a number of the villagers invited another company to come in and set up a store of such goods as they wanted, which was opened up in due season and did a thriving business. Now, in process of time there was a meeting of the villagers to transact some municipal business, when some of the stock-holders of the old store began a crusade against the new one, saying, that the new storekeeper had no right to come there and do business. "That the old store was 'The Village Store.'" So the following dialogue took place, viz:

Several of the stock holders of the first store said to some of the people: "You know that ours is 'The Village Store,' and the other fellows must have a good deal of 'gall' to come in here and start another in opposition. The trade here is small and there is no room for another store, and the result will be that if this kind of thing goes on both of them will break down and there will be no place in the village to obtain goods. Then we will be in a pretty plight, won't we?"

Just then one of the friends of the new store stepped up, and said: "Sir, tell me when did the people of this village sell themselves to your company? Tell me also, what control has the village over your store, and what share of the profits do the villagers get? Is it not owned by yourselves? Do you not pocket all the profits? What do we get that we do not pay for? I tell you sir that there are enough people who have been driven away from your store by attempts to duplicate payments from them, and by sharp dunning letters, and by saucy replies to their communications, to give another store a good trade without taking a single customer from you. You have had time enough to secure all the trade of the village, and could have had it if you have shown all the people fair play, but you have utterly failed, you have less custom now than years ago. And I want you to know that our village is a free town, and any one else has as good a right to do business here as you have. You assume a good deal when you assert that your store is 'The Village Store.'" It is more so than you have a mind to make it such. Surely, we have no control of it, and I want to tell you and all others that your store is no more the village store than the new store is. Yours is a dog in the manger policy; you will not give the people such goods as they want, nor at such prices as they can get them elsewhere and you are trying to stop any one else from doing so. Neither the new store, nor the people intend to injure your business; neither do they intend to be in bondage to your party.

ANOTHER PARABLE.

There was a piece of property in dispute between two neighbours. Each one claimed it, and one of them hired a man and set him to work on it, and was paying him as he went on with the work. But instead of working in the interests of his employer the hired man gave all his time, labour, and influence to his opponent, and sought to turn over all benefits of his work to him. When his employer heard of his conduct, he appealed to a just judge for his opinion of the

matter. The judge said, that man is treacherous and dishonest, and is not trustworthy.

The Bible as Literature and Much More.

ROBERT STUART MACARTHUR.

V

(Continued from last issue.)

The Unique Inspiration of the Bible.

Is the Bible divinely inspired? What do we mean by the inspiration of the Bible? This is a question of the utmost importance, and it is also a question to which many answers have been given. The term *inspiration* comes from the Vulgate translation of I Tim thy 3:16, *Omnia scriptura divinitus inspirata*—"all Scripture divinely inspired." In this translation into Latin, the word *inspired* is the Greek word *Theopneustos*; this word nowhere occurs in classic or profane Greek. Its appearance in Plutarch, competent critics tell us, is in all probability an error of the copyist. It clearly seems to have been used for the first time in the passage just quoted. It often became necessary for the New Testament writers to coin new words, or to put new meaning into old words. The new thought born into the world with Christianity frequently required a new vehicle for its communication to men. It is somewhat difficult to decide upon the exact meaning of the term, *inspired*, "God-breathed," as here employed; sometimes the passive meaning was given to it: "endowed with God's Spirit;" at other times it was rendered "breathing the divine Spirit;" and at still other times, as in the Vulgate, "given by the divine Spirit." Origen used the expression, "the holy volumes breathe the fulness of the Spirit." The Peshito and Ethiopic Versions understand it as meaning "inspired by God;" the Peshito translates it "every Scripture which is written in the Spirit."

Definitions of Inspiration.

It is well understood that no well defined doctrine of the inspiration was given until after the Reformation. By the use of the term *inspiration* in this discussion is meant that divine control over the minds of the writers of the Bible which enable them to write a book which is a sufficient and infallible rule of faith and practice. The book, thus prepared, may be such an infallible rule, even through errors in dates, quotations, enumerations, and even in reasoning, should be found upon its pages. It is well understood that there are different degrees and various kinds of inspiration. Sometimes the word is employed to include revelation; when so employed it implies that inspiration is the direct communication of truth by God to man, truth which human knowledge unaided by special wisdom from God could never acquire. At other times by *inspiration* is properly meant illumination; when so employed, as the connection would determine, so as to include both of these meanings. To the term a broader meaning is occasionally given; it is then used to convey the impression of such divine control as qualifies for correct oral utterance, or for heroic leadership in the kingdom of God. We are at present, however, chiefly concerned with that view of inspiration which is related to the authorship of the Holy Scriptures. In this sense it is such an influence over the writers of the Bible that all their writings, at least on distinctively religious subjects, are absolutely trustworthy. We saw in a former chapter that it was natural to suppose that God would make a revelation of Himself to the children of men. We are now prepared to affirm that if God were to make a revelation of Himself to men, it is fair to assume that He would keep the record of that revelation, especially in its distinctively religious teachings, absolutely free from error. In human courts great pains are taken to have accurate reports made by stenographers of the testimony of witnesses, the speeches of advocates, and the decisions of judges. In reports which are revelations of the divine mind and will, we can well believe that God, as the great Revealer, would take the utmost pains to secure correct reports of his revelations. What we may fairly assume seems actually to have taken place in all the revelations which God has given to man.

Jesus assumes responsibility for the inspiration of the oldest Scriptures. He quotes those Scriptures with the formula, "It is written," and also declares in regard to that Scripture, that "one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away;" and He also calls that writing "the word of God;" and affirms that it "cannot be broken." Attention has been called to the fact that Christ quotes from four of the five books of Moses, from the Psalter, from Isaiah, and from still other Old Testament books; with the formula, "It is written." Among the Jews this formula indicated that the quotation was from a sacred book, and a book whose sacredness depended largely upon a belief in its divine inspiration. Nothing written by man could equal the respect which Christ paid to the Old Testament Scriptures. He always spoke of those Scriptures as the word of God; to all Christians this fact is incontrovertible evidence of the divine origin of these Scriptures. Both Talmudic and Alexandrian Judaism agreed in ascribing to the Old Testament Scriptures a peculiar and unquestioned authority. It was constantly affirmed that the *torah*, or law, was of immediate divine origin. Some teachers of Judaism affirmed that God wrote it with His own hand, others declared that He dictated it to Moses as His amanuensis. Some were willing to admit that Joshua was the author of the account of the death of Moses; but others went so far as to affirm that Moses himself wrote the account, and wrote it with his tears. Nothing is more certain than that Jesus Christ, who spoke as never man spake, who was the great teacher and the sinless Saviour, regarded the Old Testament with as much respect as did the Jews of His day.

When Jesus commissioned the apostles and teachers, He promised them the aid of the Holy Spirit in teaching; and the apostles claimed to have received this promised Spirit and to have spoken with divine authority. They distinctly affirm that they spoke, "not in words which men's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth." The apostle Paul declares, "I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you." Those who were not apostles, as Mark, Luke, James, and Jude, were recommended to the churches by apostolic sanction and authority, and seem to have written under immediate apostolic guidance.

Theories of Inspiration.

Thus far we have spoken merely of the fact of inspiration. It is fitting, however, that we press our inquiry as to the mode or the way of inspiration. We might hold the fact with absolute tenacity, even though we could not formulate satisfactorily a theory regarding the method of inspiration. There are those who hold tenaciously to the doctrine of the atonement of Christ who find themselves unable to state a satisfactory theory of the atonement. But it is well to discover, as far as we may learn it, the method as well as the fact of inspiration.

Some have held what is known as the intuition theory of inspiration. By this term they mean simply a greater insight into truth than is possessed by the majority of men. They make inspiration but a greater degree of intellectual and spiritual apprehension than that which is possessed by the rank and file of Christian believers. They deny the uniqueness of the inspiration of the writers of holy Scripture. They would make them to be inspired as were the great philosophers and poets of classical days—or, as were Shakespeare or Milton, or Tennyson, Browning and others of modern times. This knowledge similar to that possessed by the writers of Scripture gave rise to sacred books in other religions, and to works on philosophy and art in other relations in life. This view of inspiration makes it but a higher development of the intellectual and spiritual potency of which every man is possessed in some degree.

Doubtless there is an element of truth in this view. All men have some insight into the truth, and the true theory of inspiration recognizes this general fact. But, unfortunately, in matters of religion man's insight is vitiated by sin; his judgment is thus perverted, and his moral vision greatly dimmed, and sometimes it seems to be entirely wanting. Except he be supernaturally guided, he is sure to err, and thus to be a blind leader of the blind. It is also to be observed that this theory of inspiration is self-contradictory. If it were true, then one man is inspired to teach