

BOOKS AND MAGAZINES.

THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY. (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co.)—The contents of the June *Atlantic* are remarkably attractive. On account of the presidential campaign about to open, there are several articles relating to politics, but literature predominates. Richard Grant White and Oliver Wendell Holmes contribute excellent papers to this number. Mr. Crawford's magnificent work "A Roman Singer" has reached its conclusion. "In War-Time" advances and its interest increases. There are many other admirable papers in the present issue of this standard magazine.

CALVINISM IN RELATION TO OTHER THEISTIC SYSTEMS. By William McLaren, Professor of Systematic Theology in Knox College. (Toronto: Presbyterian Printing House). When Professor McLaren's lecture was delivered at the opening of the last session of Knox College, from its clear and masterly presentation of the truth that Calvinism embraces all the positive elements in the other theistic systems and differs from them only in their negations, it attracted general attention and occasioned not a little controversy. There was an extensive demand for its publication in more permanent form than the columns of a newspaper afford. The publication committee of Toronto Presbytery have issued it, with additional notes, as the first of a series of Presbyterian tracts. There has already been a large demand for it.

SABBATH SCHOOL TEACHER.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

June 27,
1884.

OBEEDIENCE TO LAW.

{ Rom. 13:
1-10.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers."

PLACE.—As last two lessons.
TIME.—

Introduction.—There is no doubt that this portion like others which we have studied had an eye to a special danger to which the early Church was liable: a spirit of insubordination to earthly powers. This danger arose from two sources; they would, and we know they were, ready to carry the doctrines of Christian liberty into a region which the apostle had not intended, liberty to do as they willed in things that affected others and the community at large; in fact, to some of them, liberty carried the idea of license. But aside from all this there was the fact that the governments of the world were in pagan hands. To a large extent cruel despots wielded supreme power. Nero was at this time Emperor of Rome. Was it right to obey such rulers? Jesus was their King, and to Him they were willing to yield all subjection, but what of these, cruel monsters as many of them were? Then there was the Jewish element in the Church with all its ideas of national supremacy; were they not God's chosen people, more noble than any other nation, should they submit to the government of any other rulers than their own. "We be Abraham's seed and were never in bondage to any man," was their response when Jesus spoke of freedom, and this while Roman soldiers were in their streets and the Roman Eagles displayed on the fortress commanding the city. It was this spirit that made them turbulent and seditious, ever ripe for rebellion, which led to the outbreak that not long before had caused the emperor to banish all the Jews from Rome (Acts 18:2); and which finally brought about the destruction of their temple and city. The converted Jews were not all exempt from this, as is very evident from some of the references in the epistles; by not a few the idea was still cherished that Israel was to be the supreme power in the world. To counteract this spirit was the purport of this portion of Paul's letter, and it is a lesson which in this age of demagogism, and in this continent of its fullest development, that we need to learn.

Notes and Comments.—Ver. 1. "Every soul:" not exactly the same as every person, though, of course, carrying that thought; it is the soul that does either good or evil. "Subject:" submit; the contrast is resisteth. (Ver. 2.) "Higher powers:" no special government named, it is civil government that is of God. "No power but of God:" earthly authority comes from Him, by the very constitution of society as He has made it, rulers are a necessity, and so all rulers, of whatever grade, may be considered as acting by Divine appointment. It is not the man it is the office that should command our obedience. "Ordained of God:" and being so is for the advantage and benefit of the community at large.

Ver. 2. "Resisteth:" refused to obey, without, it may be, breaking forth into open rebellion. "Ordinance of God:" this appointment, that which is according to His will in the order of human government. "Receive to yourselves." Rev. "judgment:" divine judgment as we take it, through the human authority resisted.

Ver. 3. "Not a terror:" the apostle is speaking of rulers in general, there are always exceptions; less to-day, as we think, than in any previous age. "Wilt thou not be afraid?" fear, one kind precedes bad actions and has a deterring power; another follows them, the fear of punishment, but from this the obedient are free. "Do good—

thou shalt have praise of the same" the power of the ruler will not only not be against you, but it will be for you, it will protect you, and you will be esteemed as an upright and peaceable citizen.

Ver. 4. The contrast between the obedient and the lawless is carried on through this verse, to each he, the lawless, the bearer of the power, is "a minister of God" (note that Paul uses the same word of the civil power as of the ministry of the New Testament). "Bearth not the sword in vain:" the sword was the symbol of power, authority; and the apostle says that this authority will be used to punish the evil doer. "A revenger:" Rev. "an avenger to execute wrath:" the wrath of God is against all wilful evil, and the "powers that be" are ministers to execute wrath on His behalf, unknowingly perhaps, but nevertheless really.

Ver. 5. "For wrath:" which will come in judgment upon the evildoer, it is the wrath of the lawgiver whose law is broken, not passion. "For conscience sake:" or as in 1 Peter 2:13 "for the Lord's sake:" which, where the conscience is spiritually enlightened, is the same thing.

Ver. 6. "For this cause:" because the civil power is ordained of God, for the encouragement and protection of the good, and punishment of the evil doer. "Pay ye tribute" taxes, as we call the impost, the government must be supported, do you help thereto by paying your share of the expenses. Tribute had, of course, a different meaning, primarily, to taxes, it was what the conquerors demanded and received from the conquered, as the Romans from the Jews, but it was for the same purpose as our taxes, the expense of carrying on the government. "Attend continually upon this very thing:" that is, this is their business, they give all their time to it, and so should be supported by the community at large. Tertullian is quoted by Alford as saying that what the Romans lost by the Christians refusing to bestow gifts on their temples they gained by their conscientious payment of taxes.

Ver. 7. "Render therefore:" so the Saviour, Matt. 22:21. "Tribute—custom:" the first is direct taxation for the purposes of State, the other, the duties levied upon the importation of goods. "Fear—honour:" the reverence and respect to be given to those whose official positions demanded it; it is official fear and reverence, and has no reference to the character of those who fill the positions. Happy the people the personal qualities of whose rulers win what their official positions call for.

Ver. 8. The apostle now proceeds from exhorting the believers as to their duties to rulers, to general mutual duties. "Owe:" this must not, of course, be interpreted to mean, that we are at no moment to owe anything to any man, but that we are to fulfil all the obligations we contract, never to repudiate our just debts, or seek by an legal technicality to avoid their payment. "But to love:" ah! here is a debt that can never be paid, yet one we must always be paying; nay, the more we pay the deeper we feel the debt to be, because the practice of love makes the principle of love deeper and more active. "Fulfilled the law:" what law? the moral law, as contained in the ten commandments, for he who loves all men cannot do them the evils forbidden there. This is the burden of the next verse.

Ver. 9. The apostle here reviews the commandments, the "thou shalt nots," and leaves us but one path, the right one. "Comprehended:" this positive declaration to the working of love includes all the negative precepts given or suggested, he whose heart is full of love need never trouble himself about any of the precepts with regard to his neighbour, he cannot break them.

Ver. 10. Love, as in the lesson for May 4th, is personified, and the working of that love is an absence of working ill to fellow-men, "fulfilling of the law," as in verse 8.

HINTS TO TEACHERS.

Prefatory.—On this continent, and in this Dominion of ours, the lesson of to-day is a lesson our young people much need to learn, if the principle of reverence for authority of every kind has not died out, it is to a large extent much weakened; this fact is manifested in the home, as elsewhere, and it should be the aim of teachers to impress very strongly, that home is the first place where authority is to be revered. "Honour thy father and thy mother," is the first commandment with a promise, and the New Testament, as the Old, enjoins obedience to parents. Disobedience at home is followed by disobedience to the civil authorities, and each is a violation of the law of God.

Topical Analysis.—(1) Obedience to rulers enjoined (1-5) (2) Taxes to be paid for the support of rulers (6-7). (3) Duties to our fellowmen (8-9). (4) The basis of all duty. Love (9, 10).

On the first topic, we may not, that there are some points on which the apostle does not touch; he does not tell us, for instance, which is the preferable form of government, a monarchy, a republic, or the varying combinations of both; it is the rightly conducted authority, whatever shape that may take, under which we live; what is suitable for one people may be unsuited for another, for one race a republic, for another a monarchy, and for a third a still stronger form of centralization or despotism; but that form of government under which we were born, or which we have chosen by leaving our father-land, is the one which should receive from us obedience. Nor does the apostle here say anything as to the duty towards unrighteous rulers, the righteousness of rebellion and revolution. Christians were troubled in those days, have been troubled often since, as to their duty in such cases. Those to whom Paul wrote might well ask what was their duty toward such a monster as Nero, and in the rapid changes of government which took place after his death, when within twelve months there were four emperors contending for the purple, it must have been difficult for a Christian to feel that it was other than his duty to seek to place a Vespasian on the throne in the place of a Vitellius. Nor yet does he say anything as to resistance to evil commands, that was fully understood by Christians, they were to obey God rather than man, there was a limit in their obedience to authority which they must

not overstep. They were to obey, because authority is an ordinance of God. All that God establishes is binding upon man, and we find that in establishing governments among men He gave to it rights under Himself and surrounded those rights with the shield of penalties, even to the death penalty, against the man who would not "hearken unto the voice of God." He that resisteth the ruler resisteth God, because *the powers are for the common good*, a protection of the law-abiding against the lawless, a terror to evil doers. We cannot enlarge on this, but it is easily understood, illustrated and enforced.

On the second topic, show that this is the natural sequence of the first. If it is right to recognize and obey the power, it is right and needful to support that power by taxes and dues. Protection implies protectors, and they must be supported, so that in various ways money is required for civil government. In whatever form this is levied, by what is called direct or indirect taxation it is the Christian's duty honestly to pay it, not to represent his income or his property as less than they really are, that he may escape paying a few dollars more per year; neither to practise petty smuggling as too many who call themselves Christians are ready to do; nor to undervalue the articles on which they pay duties, nor yet to overcharge for any service performed on the ground that it is wronging no one; forgetting that robbery and cheating are equally so whether the victims be private individuals or the government of a town or country, there is no difference. If we could train our young people in these truths there would cease to be the scandals that are sometimes brought to light. Press these practical truths, truths taught alike by the Master and His apostles.

On the third and fourth topics we have not left ourselves room to speak, but they were so fully treated in lessons 4 and 5 of this quarter that we can afford to pass them over here, simply insisting that the ground of all duty, toward God or man must be based on love. Love will not work ill to any, and as the law is for the good of all, love fulfils the law.

INCIDENTAL TRUTHS AND TEACHINGS.

Governments exist for the good of the community at large so they should be obeyed by all.

He who resists the law resists the ordainer of the law—God.

The righteous man need have no fear of the law. The payment of taxes and all State dues should be religiously observed.

The only debt the Christian should owe is the debt that can never be paid—Love.

The heart filled with love is a law to itself.

Main Lesson.—Rulers (1) ordained of God—Numbers 11:16; 17:25; Neh. 9:37; Prov. 8:15-16; Dan. 2:20, 21, 37, 38, 47; 4:17-32. (2) To be obeyed—Matt. 22:21; Titus 3:1; 1 Peter 1:13-15; 2 Peter 2:10-11; Jude 8:9.

[Through oversight, an unfortunate typographical mistake occurred in the title of the Sabbath School Lesson for June 15th. It is fortunate that the error in printing is so obvious. No reader can mistake that "Unbelievers" should read "Believers."—ED. C. P.]

THE SONG OF THE WOOD THRUSH.

The song of this bird defies description, though it has inspired both extravagant and poetical attempts in the most prosaic of writers. When heard from a distance, it sounds very deliberate: a succession of detached passages, with frequent pauses, ending in a trill, sometimes easily distinguished as such, but often so rapidly delivered that it resembles the syllable "chee-e-e" with a peculiar and indescribable thrill in it. If you are near, however, you will find the pauses filled with low notes, having, apparently, no connection with the song. One cannot but fancy them to be irrepressible words of encouragement, ineffably sweet and tender, and wonderfully enhancing the charm of the performance.

He is not chary of his gift. He sings at all hours of the day, excepting in the heat of noon, but he seems most keenly to enjoy the fading light of afternoon and the evening, till long after dark. Not a little of the mystery and melancholy that poetical minds find in his music is due to the thoughtful twilight hours in which it is heard. It is itself far from sadness. Indeed there can be no more perfect picture of deep joy than this beautiful bird, standing tranquilly on his branch, while giving slow utterance to notes that thrill your soul.

The weather is a matter of no moment to the wood thrush; he has a soul above externals. Other birds may be full of song, or moping on their perches; be it wet or dry, sunshine or shade, he sings, and sings, and sings.

"Howsoever the world goes ill,
The thrushes still sing in it."

The strongest attraction of a certain summer home in the heart of the Allegheny Mountains is the song of this bird. Around the house feathered visitors are always numerous, but no wood thrush is ever seen. Late in the afternoon, however, when other songsters are settling themselves for the night, and save the robin chatter, no sound of bird is heard, out of the deep wood which surround the small clearing comes the stirring evening hymn of the thrush. It begins with a clear, far-off prelude of three notes on an ascending scale; then a deliberate rest, followed by three other and different notes, and ending in a rapturous trill. After a decorous pause another takes up the strain. There is no haste, no interruption, never a clamour of song. Each one enjoys his full length of time, and though there may be a dozen singers within hearing, there is no confusion. Each rich solo is a complete whole, perfect as a pearl. To sit on a balcony of that house through the long tranquil hours of approaching night, listening to the grand and lofty symphony, is a never-to-be-forgotten experience; lifting the soul above the earth, into regions and poetry and dreams.—*June Atlantic.*