

The evils of the monastic system are inherent to a non-natural life, invented by man as something better and holier than the path which God has marked out for us. No niggling improvement in detail can affect what is fundamentally unsound. It was the wisdom of the Reformers to perceive this, and therefore no effort was made to revive the Orders which Henry VIII's statecraft and rapacity impelled him to subvert. It will be our own fault if we are deceived by such phrases as Sisterhoods 'on the lines of the Church of England.' Ritualists celebrate the mass, and practice auricular confession on what they are pleased to call the 'lines of the Church of England.' But we may depend upon it a Sisterhood which would really harmonize with Church principles and practice would be as unlike the Rochester Convent as our simple services are to the tawdry travesties of Romish vanities. It would lack the very essence of the conventual system. The Church of England has plenty of room for women's work. It needs their help and devotion, and God forbid that we should discourage those who are willing to give either all or any part of their lives to the Master's service. But we protest strongly and seriously against the employment of methods which long and painful experience has proved to be hurtful alike to the individual, the Church, and the Church's work."

### The Sunday School.

#### SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON.

2ND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY, JUNE 22ND.  
1884.

#### BIBLE LESSON.

##### Obedience to Law:—Rom. 13; 1-10.

As a system of religious truth, Christianity is as much above all other religions as the heavens are higher than the earth—as God's thoughts and ways are above those of man. Well might the apostle, after unfolding some of these glorious truths in the preceding part of his Epistle, overwhelmed with their importance and sublimity, exclaim, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" But Christianity is not a system of mere abstract doctrines. It teaches and enforces the purest morality and the loftiest piety. Its doctrinal form of sound words is not more remarkable than its practical precepts and exhortations to a holy life. Thus Paul, in this letter to the Romans, after closing his doctrinal discussion, proceeds to enforce the duties these doctrines are intended to inculcate, in a great variety of practical suggestions. The doctrinal discussion continues down to the close of chap. 11, and the practical exhortations very appropriately begin with the duty of entire consecration to God (12: 1).

I. OBEDIENCE TO CIVIL LAW (vs. 1-7).—"Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers." There can be little question that the "higher powers" here are the civil authorities, the human government under which the Christians at Rome were living. Human government of some kind or other is necessary to the existence of human society, and is of divine appointment. "For there is no power but of God; and the powers that be are ordained of God." Taking the word "ordained" in the sense of permit, all the governments of earth, good or bad, are ordained of Him. But taking the word "ordained" in the sense of decreed or appointed, which is probably the true sense here, it is manifest that the application is to the principle of civil government, whatever may be its form. There is much of imperfection, and, indeed, of positive evil in the governments of men, which cannot be said to be of divine appointment. The government which is in harmony with the will of Heaven, and which may be said to be "ordained of God," is indicated in our lesson. It is that which promotes the good and discourages the evil. Divinely appointed "rulers are not a terror to the good work, but to the evil." They are those who are on the side of all who seek to do good. "And wouldst thou have no fear of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise for the same: for he is a minister of God to thee for good." To determine, therefore, what kind of civil government is really of divine appointment, and is, therefore, to be obeyed and supported, we must ascertain if in a general

way it is according to the will of God. Not the will of an absolute monarch, not public sentiment, even when organized into constitutional law; but the will of God is the standard of virtue for the government as for the individual. Because human governments are sometimes found opposing the will of God, resistance to them sometimes becomes a duty. "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye." Yet civil authority, though by no means perfect, in the main is on the side of right and against wrong—its sword of power is a terror, not to do good deeds, but to bad; it is a necessity to the existence of well-ordered society, and the duty of "subjection" rests upon "every soul." The civil magistrate acts under God as his minister, at least so far as the law discriminates against wrong-doing and in favor of the right. Civil government has God's authority to enforce obedience and support. "But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is a minister of God, an avenger for wrath to him that doeth evil." The "sword" is the emblem of authority and the instrument of force. The magistrate is divinely authorized to punish transgressors and rebels. But coercion has its rules and limitations. Its purpose must always be the highest good of the greatest number. The "new commandment" to "love one another" is the law of humanity; nothing can justify its violation. The civil authority should be obeyed, not only because of fear of its penalties, "but also for conscience' sake"—because it is right. The right of the civil government to exist and to enforce obedience to all righteous laws, carries with it the right of taxation, and consequent obligation of the subject to pay the tax imposed and loyally to support his government to the best of his ability. "For this cause ye pay tribute also; for they are ministers of God's service, attending continually upon this very thing. Render to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear: honor to whom honor."

II. OBEDIENCE TO THE LAW OF LOVE (vs. 8-10).—Paul's exhortations grow broader as he proceeds. From the payment of dues to the government, he passes to the general precept, "Owe no man anything." Pay your debts; or, better still, make no debt—certainly not any debt which you cannot see your way clear to pay. At this point the claims of the law of love seem to flash on the apostle's mind, and he adds, "Save to love one another." Owe nothing save the debts of love: these you can never exhaust. The debt of love is one which a Christian must owe forever. But though this debt is one which cannot be paid off altogether and made an end of, the apostle shows us how we may go on making continual payments towards it, by loving our neighbor as ourselves. "For he that loveth his neighbor hath fulfilled the law." We are not left in doubt as to what law Paul has in mind. He quotes from the decalogue and makes a part to stand for the whole. What does he mean by fulfilling the law? To fulfill a thing is to fill it full, so that no part of it is left void or empty. It is in this sense that our Lord uses the word in the sermon on the mount: "Think not that I came to destroy the law of the Prophets: I came not to destroy but to fulfill" (Matt. 5: 17). As if he had said, "I came to show you the exceeding depth and breadth of God's commandments—how much they require of everyone when they are taken in their full meaning. My Father sent me not to abolish holiness but to broaden its limits; so that it shall embrace not only the outward action of men, but their very thoughts, purposes, and desires." In the light of this utterance of our Lord, the fulfilling of the law, of which the apostle here speaks, cannot mean less than the keeping of it in its fullest, its deepest, its most spiritual meaning. How much this law contains we may learn from the exposition of it in the sermon on the mount and other utterances of Jesus.

The claims of God's law upon us, when taken in their full extent, are vast. "Now, let me ask you, for claims like these you can give a receipt in full? who can satisfy them? who can hope to satisfy them in any degree? Paul tells us,—not indeed how to discharge the debt, so as to be quit of it; for it cannot be discharged: it is perpetually growing: therefore, when he says 'Owe no man anything,' he brings in that remarkable exception, 'save to love another,' for he that loveth his neighbor hath fulfilled the law.' Love is the fulfilling of the law. If we had perfect love for our neighbor, we should keep these commandments perfectly: and in proportion as love fills us, in the same proportion shall we fulfill them. Love then will enable us to keep the commandments: nothing else will,—no worldly fear, no regard for reputation, not even a sense of duty, unenlightened by the spirit of love. These motives may indeed raise us to the level of the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees; but they are not strong enough to lift us up to that height of righteous-

ness, which Jesus Christ requires from his disciples. It only remains for us to consider how we are to obtain this love. Paul in another place tells us that too. The fruit of the Spirit, he says, is love. But of what Spirit? Why, of the Spirit of Christ: as it is written, 'when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, that he might redeem them which were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba Father' (Gal. 4: 4-6). By the coming of our Saviour Christ we have been adopted into God's family; and as an earnest of his favor, and to enable us to serve him with the hearts of sons, God has given us the Spirit of Christ, of which Spirit the fruit is love. This is the golden chain and succession and inheritance of blessings: forgiveness, adoption, favor, the Spirit, the fruits of the Spirit, the fulfilling of the law. And all this succession and inheritance comes to us as coheirs with Christ."

#### CATECHISM LESSON.

##### Our Duty towards God.

The ten commandments were originally written by God himself on two tables of stone: Ex. xxxi. 17-xxxii. 15, 16, and were placed by His command in the ark of the tabernacle: Deut. x. 5. He has promised again to write them by His Spirit (the finger of God: Luke xi. 20, with Matt. xii. 28) on the hearts of His people: Heb. x. 16. We are not told how many there were upon each table; some have thought five. Most probably the division followed by our catechism is the correct one: four on the first table, six on the second—the one containing the duty towards God, the other the duty towards our neighbor: Matt. xxii. 36-40. They were thus divided, apparently, by our blessed Lord.

Our duty towards God should lead us to seek His glory, to be zealous for His worship, to honor His name, and to reverence His day. The four commandments which set these before us may all be summed up in one word which God Himself addresses to us. "My son give me thine heart:" Pro. xxiii. 26; Ps. cxix. 10. And we can understand it, for the heart is the centre of the affections: Judges xvi. 15. It is the source, too, whence flows all the evil that is in man by nature: Matt. xv. 19; Gen. viii. 21; Eccles. ix. 3. It is that which must be changed to make a man a godly man: Ps. li. 10. 15; 1 Chron. xxviii. 9; and so we always pray before reading the commandments in Church—"Almighty God, unto whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid, cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love Thee, and worthily magnify Thy holy name, through Christ our Lord:" Heb. iv. 12, 13; Ps. cxxxix. 23, 24.

### Missionary.

#### WOMAN'S WORK IN INDIA.

So many other interesting mission fields have occupied our attention, that it is a long time since we have told our readers anything about the work in the Zenanas (house of the women) in India. And yet we know that this branch of mission work touches a sympathetic chord in many hearts.

We think we may take for granted that by this time all our readers know what Zenana work means, and that a number of English ladies have gone out to India and found a way into the miserable homes of the women, and are teaching them about Jesus. We therefore feel sure that some extracts from these ladies' journals will be welcomed by many.

The difficulties are great; but one extract will show where the workers have learnt to go for help. Miss Wanton, who has the charge of missionary schools at Amritsur, writes: "I think I mentioned last year that we were looking out for a larger building for our Central School. The place where it is now held has become too strait for us, but the difficulty has been where to find a better. We searched the city through and through, and went over nearly twenty different houses. Not one combined all the requisites we sought,—the rooms were too small, or the rent too large, or the situation undesirable, and so on. Still the idea was not to be relinquished, for it was quite

plain that a move of the burden pressing it was rolled off upon that, every house be under His control, and most suitable, but that morning was wealthy Sardar's wife been lately gained. to her; at once they have the use of my I went to look at it what we had asked convenient place pos:

"Then came the friend offer it to us which only promotes secular that when she knows she will repent of her had not lent it. So she told her plainly that as secular knowledge Christ as the one on are welcome,' she said like, and my two nieces girls who had been in school too.' So we are ng her, and thanking her heart to show us to help forward His work our new quarters this will be long before we that our accommodat:

The sad condition of known; they are often years of age and upon considered accursed and cruelty. Miss W. a school for them, and unexpectedly sent to the dication of God's will mence such a work.

"The school was opened the news spread, and poured in. Oh, what brought! Ever since that of the widows, and especially has been in my ears; in house and every school children, even amongst are enduring this sorrow den of disgrace, loneliness because the corrupted forbid re-marriage—custom Hindu laws allow

"It would have been never been made," was of my listeners in a Zenonstrated with her a only modified it by adding to become widows, it them if they had never privilege to bring the labor to these wounded souls ready than many other Friend of the friendless get a brighter welcome me as I take my seat, hand, amongst the great Widows' School."

This surely is an important friends not like to help to pray for it? The following opening in long-closed friends.

"Nearly all the Zenanas been kept up, and in a new houses have opened of the inhabitants of this kept their doors closed as the Sikh Sardas or chie could see no sign of the but this year the widow Sardars of the place (the who has offered us the building School) invited us to com