

ninety-first Psalm in the following celebrated strains:—

"O'er thee the secret shaft  
That wastes at midnight, or the undreaded hour  
Of noon, flies harmless: and that very voice  
Which thunders terror through the guilty hear,  
With tongues of seraphs whispers peace to thee."

Every individual will exclaim, This is beautiful! And very beautiful it is. But let us listen to the original poet himself; rather, to a literal prose translation of the mighty monarch bard:—

"He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High  
Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty!  
He shall cover thee with his feathers;  
And under his wings shalt thou trust!  
Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night,  
Nor for the arrow that flieth by day,  
Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness,  
Nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday!  
Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder;  
The young lion and the dragon thou shalt trample under feet!"

THE Bible is a store-house of truth and beauty. It contains history to instruct, precepts to guide, poetry and incidents to inspire and charm. It gives us the history of creation, the origin of the different languages, and the beginning of the most ancient nations. From it we learn the cause and the history of that deluge, with which the present mineralogical and geological structures of the earth are intimately connected. The laws of Moses are the foundation of the laws of all Christian nations. The Decalogue, the Proverbs of Solomon, and Christ's Sermon on the Mount, are the original sources from which correct moral teaching is drawn. No feigned inspiration of bards or sybils can compare with that which is real and Divine. It was the soft, the pensive, the heart-melting strains of David, that taught the Christian poet to sing his delightful Task. It was at this sacred fountain of simplicity and grandeur that Milton lit up the fires of his immortal muse. Tasso's Jerusalem Delivered would never have seen the light, nor would the returning crusaders have brought into Europe the revival of letters, had it not been for the sacred associations which the Bible has thrown around Zion and Olivet, the waters of Siloam and the cross of Calvary.

The incidents of the sacred volume are such events as the plagues of Egypt; the passage of the Red Sea; the Law given amidst the smoke and thundering and rocking of Sinai; the downfall of Babylon; the shaking of the nations; the burning of the world. The mightiest events are often painted by a single stroke of the sacred pencil, "Come down, O Babylon, sit in the dust," predicts the overthrow of the mightiest empire of ancient days. In history or in visions, the nations of the earth are often thrown upon the sacred pages, and disappear like the rapid and brilliant meteors of night. All the lovers of truth and of beauty, of ancient song and ancient lore, would admire the Bible and publish its praises, trumpet-tongued, to earth's ends, were it not for the religious doctrines and the moral duties which it inculcates.

#### HAS EVERY MAN A RIGHT TO READ THE BIBLE?

From the Correspondent of the N. Y. Observer.

MONTAUBAN, TARN-AND-GARONNE, }  
April 15, 1842.

A LEARNED minister of the Gospel, Mr. Oster, has published lately a book upon this question: "Has every man a right to read the Bible?" In this work is a chapter in which the author examines by what causes and means the Romish church has come gradually to forbid laymen to read the Word of God. It will be interesting to give you a sketch of these investigations, adding such as I have made from other sources.

At first view, we cannot understand how any church whatever has dared to prevent the reading of the Scriptures. What, indeed? Here is a book which is called the *Book of God*, the *Word of the Holy Spirit*, and do you forbid men to read it? Has God then given a work dangerous for souls? Has the Holy Spirit inspired things, the reading of which is pernicious? Are you wiser than God?

These objections, so natural, so simple, have often much embarrassed the popish priests; and when they meet with enlightened adversaries, they pretend that Rome has not forbidden the reading of the Bible, and charge the protestants with slander. Let us examine then the subject by the light of history, and we shall see what Rome has done and directed respecting the Holy Scriptures.

Every body knows that, in the early times of Christianity, the reading of the Bible was as universal as prayer among the members of the church. Justin, the martyr, invites the Gentiles to read the Bible, by relating the good effects which this reading had produced among Christians. Clement of Alexandria, informs us that Christians had the habit of reading some chapters of the Bible, before taking their meals. Tertullian condemns marriages between Christians and infidels, for this reason, that they prevent the daily reading of the Scriptures. Origen exhorts men to meditate upon the Word of God, not only in church, but in their houses. The bishop of Hippo, Augustine, says that there existed in his time innumerable translations of the Bible. In a word, the Fathers of the church are unanimous in attesting that, in the age when they lived, the Word of God was generally read.

At this period, it is evident that the bishops of Rome did not dream of preventing the reading of the Bible. Had they dared to do it, a cry of indignation would have been raised against them from all quarters, and would have compelled them to retract this wicked prohibition. How, then, have they since come to do so?

If the Latin language had continued to be the universal medium of communication among the nations of Europe, the reading of the Bible would have been kept up. But the invasions of the Barbarians produced gradually new dialects, Italian, French, Spanish, which were originally but ill-formed provincial dialects. Schools were shut, study forsaken, learning forgotten. Scenes of robbery and blood filled all the West. A profound ignorance crept over the church itself. The new Christians, Goths, Vandals and Germans knew only the external forms of religion, and passed their lives upon the field of battle. The priests were not better instructed. All the books and all the intelligence of ancient times had fled to a few monasteries.

The bishops of Rome, with consummate address, took advantage of things to strengthen and extend their dominion. They were then in a critical position. Their prerogatives had originated in the city where they resided. So long as Rome was the metropolis of the world, they had exerted a vast influence upon the churches of the West. But when new kingdoms were formed, the bishops who resided at their capitals, threatened to become independent of the Romish see: it seemed right that religious independence should follow political independence.

One means of supremacy remained to the Roman pontiffs: the continued use of the Latin language in the versions of the Bible, and in the celebration of religious worship. It was necessary at any price to preserve every where the use of the Latin, or the papal authority was gone. Unity in language was essential to unity in discipline. This explains the obstinate perseverance of the bishops of Rome to prevent religious teaching in the vulgar language. There were perhaps other causes, but the above mentioned was the principal. The missionaries who went to preach Christianity to the pagans, then very numerous in Europe, had orders to perform public worship in Latin; and if they did not, they were exposed to severe reprimands.

A remarkable example of this occurs in the ninth century. Two missionaries, *Methodus* and *Cyrill*, had preached the gospel to the Bulgarians and other nations who inhabited the east of Europe. As these new converts spoke only the Slavonic language, the Latin language was not introduced into the religious services. One of the missionaries, *Cyrillus*, even invented a Slavonic alphabet, and translated the Bible into

the language of the country. This caused great indignation at Rome. The two missionaries were cited, in 867, before pope *Nicholas I.* They appeared. *Cyril*, to justify themselves, took the book of Psalms, and read this verse: "Let every thing which liveth and hath breath praise the Lord." Then he added: "It all that breathes ought to praise the Lord, why then, excellent fathers, would you forbid us from expressing the solemnities of worship in the Slavonic language? Seeing that this nation was wholly ignorant in the ways of the Lord, the Holy Spirit put this thought into our hearts, by which we have gained many souls. Pardon us then, fathers and lords, since the holy apostle Paul, the teacher of the Gentiles, says: 'Forbid not to speak with tongues' (1 Cor. xiv. 39.) If it is so, why should not the Slavonians praise the Lord in their own language?"

The pope replied to *Cyrillus* in these harsh terms: "Though the apostle recommended the use of divers tongues, he did not mean to say by this that divine service should be performed in the language of which you speak."

The missionaries returned to the churches they had founded, and as they continued to make use of the vulgar tongue, pope *John VIII.* wrote to them 879: "We learn that you celebrate mass in a barbarous, that is to say the Slavonic language. We therefore forbid you, by these our letters, from doing so."

But this prohibition did not last long. Most of the Bulgarians had recognized the authority of the patriarch of Constantinople, and the court of Rome feared that the other churches of the East would follow this example. Then, as has a thousand times happened to the Vatican, pope *John VIII.* changed his system to suit circumstances. He authorized in 880 what he had forbidden a year before. "We approve," he writes to the duke of Moravia, "of having the praises of God, the discourses and works of Jesus Christ, related in the Slavonic language. For the Bible exhorts us to praise the Lord, not in three languages only, but in all languages. And surely, nothing in faith or in doctrine prevents that the gospel, or the divine lessons of the Old and New Testament, should be read or sung, as well as other parts of religious worship, in good translations—for He who made the three principal languages, Hebrew, Greek and Latin, also made all other languages to his praise and glory."

Here then is a pope who, fearing to lose his jurisdiction over certain churches, speaks like protestants! Yes, but wait! These concessions, snatched by fear, were next revoked by another pope; such are the constant tactics of Rome, and it does not at all disturb the pretensions of successors of St. Peter to be in contradiction with each other.

To be continued.

## THE FAMILY CIRCLE.

### THE RAGGED CHILD AND THE WHITE CLOVER:

A LESSON FOR THE COMPLAINING.

THE beautiful and touching lesson of contentment contained in the following extract, is from the pen of Mrs. Child, the Editor of the National Anti-Slavery Standard. Let the uneasy, the desponding and the complaining, read and ponder it, and be happy. With all the evils of life, the sources of enjoyment are infinite, and to find them, we have only to look around us and within us, instead of looking beyond us. We are poor in the midst of abundance, and wretched with all the resources of happiness.

The celebrated traveller, Park, was once raised from despondency by an occurrence equally trifling. He had penetrated far into the interior of Africa: his food was consumed, his strength exhausted, and he alone: he lay upon the ground, with solitude and desolation on every side: giving himself up to despair, he resigned himself to death. At that moment his eye chanced to fall upon a little moss, of exquisite beauty, and the only form of vegetable life far as the eye could reach in that burning desert. The thought flashed upon him, could God create that beautiful moss, and take care of it in that dry and sandy waste, and give it such beauty, when there was no eye to admire it, and would he forsake him, his child, made in his own image, exploring his works, and destined to immortality? It could not be. New strength invigorated his limbs; he arose from the ground, and pursuing his journey in confidence in God, escaped from the desert.

"When the spirit is at war with its outward environment, because, it is not inwardly dwelling in