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THE BIBLE:  
ITS NATURE AND USE AMONG CHRISTIANS.

ANONYMOUS.

(Concluded, from page 80.)

THE evil, and it is an enormous evil, one which more than any other has tended to divide christians, and to excite rancor against each other,—this evil is, that any man should, exclusively, consider the scriptures in any one of these lights, or that he should at once take it up as *one whole inspired volume*, as containing pure unmixed truth, supposing all parts of it to be equally valuable, equally suited to edify, equally manifesting the goodness of God, without having previously considered the volume with an understanding mind; or that it should be thus read indiscriminately, even at an age and in circumstances in which the real nature of the Bible cannot be comprehended. It is such conduct as this that causes the Bible, the best of books, often to be treated and misused as if it

was the worst. We will briefly point out some of the chief evils which arise from reading the volume exclusively in any one of these ways.

Little need be said perhaps respecting the use of *this book* as a story book, or as one in which children should be taught to read ; and yet so extensively is this done, and that by persons who regard the very words of each book to be peculiarly sacred, that it cannot be passed over. Nothing is so certain to create a distaste for this volume as to make use of it as a task book, or to allow those to read it who cannot as yet take any pleasure in reading, owing to the difficulty they find in it. Nor can anything be worse than to allow this book to be read indiscriminately, chapter after chapter, without its being at all understood, and in a way which is likely to inspire any rather than *reverential* feelings towards those holy persons and those sacred subjects treated of in it. Truly there can be nothing better than parts of the Bible, such as Christ's easiest parables, parts of the sermon on the mount, and the simplest parts of Genesis, for children who will read them with attention, and be desirous of thoroughly entering into their spirit. But what can shew a greater want of knowledge respecting the nature of the Bible, or the powers of mind in infancy, than for children at an early age to be given indiscriminately any portion to read,—whether it be the book of Leviticus, or that of the Apocalypse, Solomon's Song, or the harassing tales of the Jewish wars. And yet how constantly is this done. And how can any one expect afterwards that their early impressions respecting the difficulty, or dulness, or unchristian spirit of the Bible should be easily eradicated.

With regard to the second mode of employing the

Bible, it is sufficient to say that, since the aim of the scriptures is to purify the heart and to guide the conduct of man, no merely intellectual examination of it can profit a man. The critical reading of the Bible may occupy a man's whole lifetime, and yet he will be no better for it, unless, while so doing, the spirit, the truths, contained in it inspire his soul with love to God, with determination to be wiser and better, with hopes and expectations that will bless him here in the paths of virtue and piety, and conduct him through all trials and difficulties to bless in heaven. If this is not the result he might as well be employed about the works of Homer or Virgil, except perhaps so far as his labors may, as they often do, conduce to the real edification of minds more susceptible than his own. But this is not the usual fact. Few can begin by reading the Bible critically, without ending in persuing it devotionally—with the heart impressed with God's power and goodness, shewn in his dealings with mankind.

The third, however, is the error which is most usually committed at the present day, and that too by the very best of men, viz., reading the sacred volume for edification, without having any adequate knowledge previously of its nature, origin, and varied contents. What has been the result? These persons come to the Bible with christian feelings, with warm imaginations, and with preconceived opinions handed down to them from their forefathers, or taught in modern catechisms, respecting the plenary inspiration of *every word* as well as *fact*, of *every deed* as well as of *every person* therein mentioned; and what can they then make of certain parts in this volume? The only resource is to treat it as no other book on the face of the earth is treated, and where a writer in the Bible *says one*

*thing* to suppose he *meant another*: where the letter and literal interpretation conveys an unchristian sentiment, or a false doctrine of philosophy, to allegorize it, and attach to the words some figurative meaning.

This was a very ancient plan. It was invented by the Jews; but they did it systematically, openly, and knowingly; whereas now it is most frequently done unintentionally, with perfect good faith that by so doing they are getting nearer the true, because a better—a more holy, meaning.

The Jews had three or four methods of interpretation. Besides the literal historical sense, they used an allegorical and a magical. By the latter was meant that each separate letter conveyed some mystical idea by which they obtained, as they thought, an additional sense from scripture. This system was adopted by the Gnostics of Alexandria, an early sect of christians, and was thus regarded by some of them about the year 150, the literal interpretation was suited for animal man, and the mystical and spiritual served for those who had become spiritual.

Origen in some degree followed up this system. He declares that there is a threefold mode of interpreting to be found in the Divine Writings,—an historical, a moral, and a mystical one; by which he understood that the scriptures possess as it were a body, a living principle, and a spirit within them. He however did not invent this system; but, on the contrary, did much service to christianity by clearly distinguishing the historical, or which is the same—the grammatical and literal, interpretation from the other two; and by contributing much learning towards *thus* understanding them.

Unfortunately this method has not been confined to the

Alexandrian school; but modern divines, besides adopting many of the results of such an interpretation, have come to no less strange ones themselves. Christians have never been contented with the evident meaning of scripture, but consciously or unwittingly have constantly *put their own sense into* scriptural language, instead of *drawing out* the writer's meaning pure from the written fount. While reading this volume in a kind of dreamy state, with their imaginations full of spiritual thoughts, they have often confounded the ideas and feelings suggested to their minds by words of scripture, for the literal meaning originally intended; and as this has been done by various minds differently educated and constituted, the most conflicting ideas respecting what the Bible contains have necessarily resulted; each man has read as it were his own Bible in the reflection of his own preconceived opinions. For it is clear that the historical and literal—the original meaning of the Bible, interpreted according to scientific principles, is the only one about which men can agree. Each and every other meaning must belong to the varied minds that read, and not to *one and the same book* that is read.

Thus the learned and pious Pascal, in his "Thoughts," treats all the Old Testament as figurative, just as the Jews did those parts which were in themselves of an undevo-tional character—as the Song of Solomon. Pascal regards the Law, the sacrifices and kingdoms there mentioned, not as realities but as emblems. Babylon means an offence, Egypt—iniquity. Now all this may be very clever; it may make good sense; it may really edify and suggest to the mind pious thoughts and feelings; but who could regard it as *scripture*;—is it not indeed "*Pascal's Thoughts*," and no one's else?

Swedenborg is well known to have followed in the same steps ; but then as he was a prophet, his followers naturally consider that he had a superior power to know and discover these hidden meanings. Yet modern christians too do this very thing practically, without knowing it. Do not most pay such deference to the early interpreters of the Prophets, and Solomon's Song, and other parts of the old Testament? Here it is evidently only a figurative or typical and not the historical and literal meaning that is put at the head of each chapter of our English translation to describe its contents. So too have other great men, such as Fenelon in France, Kant and Herder in Germany, put another and often an allegorical sense into the language of scripture.

Kant and Pascal, like the early Alexandrian critics, defended this system upon philosophical grounds. And there is much, very much, to be said in favour of this system,—so long as we think ourselves obliged to regard the whole Bible as equally corresponding to truth, and to the will of God, in all its parts. Indeed this is the only way, as already intimated, by which some portions of it can be rendered palatable, and, still more, edifying to a mind well instructed in the teachings of the Saviour, or in the truths of modern science. Nor could much be said against it, were all such allegorical interpretations taken for no more than they are worth—as the clever ideas of the preacher or the interpreter,—and not enforced as the word of God, or as certainly divine truth, while others are denounced for considering its results as mere human conceits. Even then however there would be one greater danger, into which many have fallen. If any man may thus interpret the Bible, and *put into* it his own meaning, where

can we find the certain truths which are to guide us in life. If one man interprets the Old Testament in this way, another will apply the same principles to the New, and consider the whole as a system of allegories, emblems, and figures, containing but little historical truth, as a creation of the human imagination, instead of being facts and events through which God has revealed himself to man. This indeed, is the very system which in Germany, and to some extent in England, is withdrawing all power, and authority, and actual truth, from the Gospel narratives. Its principles are similar\* to those of Professor Strauss, who, by his mythical mode of interpreting Scripture, would consider as fictitious the most momentous events in the life of the Saviour.

The substance of the Bible, then, can only be really and certainly made available to the wants of the heart of man, by being first thoroughly examined and understood by the head.

What then is the result to which such an examination is likely to lead a man? How do we regard the Bible as a whole? What are its great attractions to us? On this, though the most important question, little can be said here; each separate portion of scripture stands or falls on its own merits; each deserves for various reasons to be studied; but it is only a general view of the whole that we offer at present.

\* The similarity consists in this, that both bring to the scriptures a standard of their own, to which all narratives in the sacred volume must conform. The Allegorizers set out with the assumption that all contained in the Bible must be so understood as to harmonize with their own views of the goodness of God and of His Providence. Mythical interpreters assume that all the actual occurrences must have been of an ordinary kind, while all that is recorded of a different nature is due to the ideal investment with which the devotional imaginations of the East gradually clothed events of past History.

We speak of the Bible as the *word of God*, because in it we can read his *will*. We speak of the outward creation also, as the *volume of God*, unrolled to the inquiring mind, because *in it* an attentive mind and a devout heart can perceive the wonders of his *works*. The two then are thus related to each other. In the one we perceive the marvels of creation at one single point of time,—God's works as they are in their structure, arrangements, and mutually adapted parts. But in the other, the written Book of God, we see these wonders in an order of time, a succession of events, in a continued change and progression; in short, in *History*. By looking abroad on the face of the globe we see man *as he is*, and all the circumstances with which God has surrounded him. By attentively reading the Bible, we see man *as he was* at various periods, in different circumstances; and also the varied discipline to which the Almighty has subjected him for his gradual advancement in virtue and in happiness. In the one volume we learn the divine works, in the other the divine providence as manifested at every period of the world's history. We read of the creation of man, and the temptations to which he was exposed, his frailties and his virtues, his sorrows and his joys, his sins and his penitence, and we may also read the cause of each, and observe the consequences of every virtuous, as well as of every criminal act. We there know the will of God, and the consequences of obedience, and the penalties of disobedience. Such is its value as documents of history throughout.

But is there not moreover something peculiarly divine in parts of scripture which thrill the reader's soul with holy thoughts and fervent aspirations? Are not there some especial parts to which the heart involuntarily and



fondly turns, and by which it is the more fascinated the more they are really understood? Yes; Jesus is the *centre of attraction* to all who read the scriptures for instruction in righteousness, for reproof, or for correction. The divine light of Scripture seems to increase as we approach the memories of his life and of his teachings. The Bible is not, and cannot be equally brilliant. Far from it. The instructions of our Saviour,—his words, parables, exhortations, and still more perhaps those passages from which we learn to know him as a living example of righteousness,—these form the brilliant centre towards which all the rays of interest which carry us through the various books of the Old Testament are directed.—In Jesus are they concentrated; and from him they flow in parallel streams as we peruse the Acts and Epistles, and observe the effects of Christ's life and teachings on the Apostles, their preserving efforts to make known the glad tidings of their departed Master, and to cause his character to be embodied in the virtues, and to be cherished in the hearts, of an increasing community.

It is in this light chiefly that the Old Testament is important to Christians. The Law was the schoolmaster which led the Jewish converts to embrace christianity. They were the writings of their own nation which, in the first instance, brought them unto Christ.

It is interesting *to know the nation* out of whom the Messiah sprung—from whom salvation came to the Gentiles. It is important, if not indispensable, towards a right understanding of the Epistles of Paul, and of the various arguments by which he and the other Apostles convinced the Jews.

Above all, how important and interesting is it to observe

the manner in which, through the determinate councils of God, all former history prepared for the full revelation of God's will in Jesus. The history of Gentiles as well as of Jews unconsciously converged to this end. However learned, imaginative, wise, or powerful other nations, like the Greeks and Romans, might be, and by these qualities prepared the globe, when christianized, to receive in due time the arts and sciences, to add to the comforts and virtues of domestic life ;\* to the Jewish nation was reserved the gift of cherishing a spirit of heartfelt piety. They alone, of all nations, had all their writings penetrated with the persuasion of one supreme being, at all times present, always caring for his creatures, and by whom every event takes place. The Jews ascribe, and justly so, every event to God's power and goodness. They betray no symptom of atheism by making a distinction between events natural and supernatural. All things are and were of God: all are imbued with His spirit; all takes place at His command. However vicious, ignorant, and headstrong, the Jewish nation often proved themselves, they always possessed prophets and heroes impressed deeply with God's spirit, who recalled them back to his worship, and continually revived a devout spirit within them. They reminded them too from time to time of the early promise that there would hereafter come some mightier agent of God's will, unto whom they should hearken.

\* It is true that some degree of civilization must precede a true reception of the glad tidings brought by Christ,—and so far did Roman and Grecian Arts and Sciences prepare the way for Christianity. But it is likewise true, as here observed, that the world must be christianized before anything like a genuine civilization can take place. The spirit of the gospel can alone banish war, drunkenness, and other vices from society; and not till then—not till the spirit of christian love is shed abroad throughout the world—will all the blessings conferred by the arts of music, painting, and sculpture, or by the various philosophical sciences, be fully enjoyed.

Jesus was the end and the finisher of all these prophetic anticipations. He has broken down the barrier between Jew and Gentile, between Religion and Philosophy, between genuine piety and real civilization. In Christianity all should be united, for each promotes the other so long as an understanding mind is added to a christian heart.

In conclusion: what is it then that chiefly divides christians, as regards their use of the Bible? It is simply this, that whereas some declare that the sacred volume alone is sufficient for a man's guide in life, and that it must be its own interpreter (and this is what Protestants profess); others, such as the Catholics, declare that the Church and the Pope and the early councils, or in other words the universal consent of Christendom, is the only safe interpreter of scripture, and authority in faith. How this is to be determined must be left to the learned in Oxford and in Rome.

Protestants, however, though they thus profess to take the *Bible only* as their guide, and therefore naturally their own views of the Bible, they still generally declare beforehand the results to which a study of the Bible *must lead*, and condemn to perdition those who derive from its perusal *different* opinions. Catholics are safe; they believe what their Church tells them. But Protestants refuse such authority, at the risk of destruction, should they come to conclusions differing from certain creeds or articles drawn up by their forefathers at Westminster or at Oxford!

From both of these views we differ; we believe that so long as a man strives to understand the will of God as revealed in Christ, and with his whole heart endeavours to

practice it, he is fulfilling the purpose for which the Bible should be read; and he will be accepted according to what he has in him of the true spirit of Christ. The Bible requires learned men to understand large portions of it. Moreover most, for want of time and opportunity to examine for themselves, must believe on authority in matters of theology, as they must in those of medicine. But as there is no council capable of enforcing any particular selection out of the medical profession; so neither is there any power on earth to enforce the precepts and views of one Doctor in Theology rather than another. Each must consider who is most capable of imparting to him a real knowledge of the scriptures, who has the best advantage of studying them, and therefore is most capable of solving his difficulties, or of leading him to correct opinions concerning their doctrines and precepts. Each must carefully choose his own authorities. If however those who have had no opportunities are preferred to those who have had them; or if those whose situation is liable to bias them to conclusions, to which they were bound to subscribe before they had the means of knowing the correctness of them;—if these men are to be the authorities of the world in points of theological doctrine, how can we expect anything but a conservative priestcraft to rule the hearts of the people, and to keep their minds in ignorance.

Non-subscribers to articles of faith,—that is those who practically take the Bible as their only standard of religious and theological truth,—have, as a matter of history, almost universally converged by degrees to what are commonly called Unitarian opinions. Whether under the title of Christians in America, or non-subscribing Presbyterians in Ireland, or English Presbyterians and General

Baptists,—nearly all have come to a most singular unanimity of opinion; a unanimity caused simply by each using his own judgment upon the contents of scripture. This has frightened many who in other respects are and were friends to free inquiry. Confessions of faith are commonly exacted from teachers of theology, that they may not correct or alter the character of their teachings, and even from students who have yet to learn what the Bible does teach. The Puseyites allow, as the Catholics had long done before them, that Unitarianism is *the doctrine* taught in the Bible; and they therefore go back to councils and writers of the fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries, as authorities to support the doctrine of modern orthodoxy,—by means of an inspiration which the successors to the Apostles are supposed by them to possess. Such is the posture of Unitarians at present as regards the Bible. This is the source of their faith. In this volume they read the *teachings of the Saviour*; and these, as they believe, afford the best principles to man through life, and the most blessed hopes in death.

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I CALL that man devout who feels and tries to feel the presence of God; who is not afraid nor unwilling to have the eye of God upon him,—who rather rejoices in it, knowing that it makes him more faithful; who endeavors to conciliate God, not with flattery in long and unmeaning prayers, not by running down himself and human nature, but by *doing His will*.—*W. B. O. Peabody.*

## THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

BY REV T. S. KING.\*

THE worst errors of Orthodoxy, we believe, are traceable to a radical misconception of the mental structure of St. Paul, and especially to an oversight of the fact that his Epistle to the Romans is, in the noblest sense of that word, a *rhetorical*, rather than a logical or dogmatic, composition. It does not pretend to give truth cold-pressed into a formal treatise ; but it shows us truth jetting hot out of a passionate soul, for immediate practical effect, for the most efficient service against prejudices, that must be offended as little as possible, but which, for the honor of the gospel, must some way be stricken down. The positive and eternal principles of the gospel, therefore, are not set in a philosophical form, as though the apostle were drawing a creed for all ages, to be rigidly interpreted by the intellect ;— but they are interfused with rhetorical conceptions ; they are set in historical lights, that will make them most available for the practical crisis which the apostle would meet, without any damage to their spiritual authority and force. A great lawyer, arguing an important cause to a jury, whose habits of mind and prejudices he is familiar with, and whose favorable verdict is immediately necessary, puts truth in a different attitude, and uses other laws of impression, than would be proper if he sat on the judge's bench to write a decision in the same case, that must stand for all ages as part of public jurisprudence. The same truth might appear in both instances ; but if the same verbal methods were applied to

\* From Review of Beecher's " Conflict of Ages."

the interpretation of it, — if constant reference was not made to the rhetorical purpose in the first case, and the cold abstract aim in the second, a perfectly false system might be evolved from the speech of the pleader, and principle be attributed to him which he would thoroughly detest.

Thus, it was the object of St. Paul to root out of the Jewish mind every notion of a covenant relation between them and God, that could be suffered to pledge His providence to a peculiar favoritism for them through all history. The proper breadth and harmony of the church were not possible, till this conceit should be expurgated from their brain. So he seeks a universal stand-point, in the first place, which will bring Jews and Gentiles together before the government of Heaven. With the latter there has been the covenant of conscience and natural morality ; with the former the covenant of election and the Mosaic code. How do the human parties stand, he asks, as to these common covenants ? They have equally broken them — the Jews by not living in conformity with their revealed code, and the Gentiles, by violating their inborn sense of right. If *covenants* are to be talked about, therefore, Paul means to show that neither party has anything to claim from God ; and if God, abandoning the whole principle of covenants, chooses to meet the whole race with a fresh and surprising mercy, what has the Jews to object to the universality of the new system ? what has either party to do, but acknowledge the grace of Heaven, and strive together in a fellowship of gratitude because of the common boon ? Such a mercy, Paul argues, has been displayed towards the whole race in the gift of Christ, who published the paternity of the

Infinite, promised blessings that no souls could have expected on any grounds of covenant, and offered helps to a holy and filial life, which neither natural conscience, nor the Mosaic law, could supply. Just as the mercy-seat in the Jewish temple was the visible sign that God had chosen the Hebrew nation once, for blessings to which they had no legal claim, so Christ has become a new propitiatory, or mercy-seat, and stands as the sign of a freely manifested love towards the whole race; so that all sins are fully forgiven, and a new light imparted to every soul, that comes into communion with him by vital faith.

And then Paul brings out from the Hebrew records, the universal principles which are implied in their chief documents, and the great types which the Messiah should be expected to fulfil. He shows that Abraham was first chosen on account of faith; so that in blessing the Gentiles on the ground of faith, in the Christian system, God is only giving full sweep to the principles which the Hebrew records themselves lift into light. Again the great troubles of humanity are *common* ones, and have descended from Adam, the ancestor of Gentiles as well as Jews. And shall not Christ stand in as broad relations to the world as the first man? Shall he not be the head of a spiritual lineage, including all races, just as Adam stands at the fountain-head of a common sinfulness and wretchedness? Furthermore, does not the Pentateuch, does not the book of Isaiah, show plainly enough that God has always held the lines of His government in His own hands, unhampered by covenants with men, so that He could choose those to be His people who were not His people? The Jewish exclusiveness, therefore, he argued, is riddled every way — by reason, by the principles of



their own traditions, and by the open declarations of the records to which they appeal.

Now, Orthodoxy perverts the argument, and mistakes the sweep of this epistle, on every point. The vivid pictures which Paul paints to show that Jews and Gentiles have broken their covenants with the Almighty, Calvinism interprets as a mathematical projection of the doctrine of total depravity. Paul's idea that they have nothing to claim of God, on terms of bargain, Calvinism stiffens into the dogma that the human race are born under the shadow of infinite wrath. The apostle's poetic conception, in the third chapter of Romans, of Christ as a new *ilasterion*, or mercy-seat, whence God freely dispenses the richest favors to all men who have the filial spirit, Calvinism deforms into the hideous proposition, that Christ was needed as a sacrifice, to enable God to be propitious to a revolting race. The allusion to Abraham, intended by the apostle to lift the Jewish mind above the idea of covenants, is perverted into the idea that the Christian Church is founded on a strict covenant of faith, which forbids any Heavenly mercy to stray beyond the believer in a propitiatory offering. The reference to Adam is dwarfed from its typical breadth and rhetorical magnificence, to the idea of federal headship, or a corrupted nature flowing from that fountain into every breast. And the references to the Old Testament by which the apostle proves that God had never given up the right to turn and broaden the channels of His providence as He pleased, have been frozen into the dogma of personal election, and a foreordination that annihilates free-will.

## "WHAT ARE THE HOUSEHOLD GODS?"

BY REV. S. OSGOOD.\*

WHAT are the household gods? We have not, like the Romans, the custom of setting up images in our homes, and keeping a votive flame always burning before them. Yet the sentiment which the Roman custom expressed, we must in some way entertain. Every household has its idols, the emblems of its faith or infidelity. It has many associations peculiar to itself, and makes its own choice moreover among the associations that prevail in the neighborhood, or world, or age. It has its own Manes, or its especial remembrances of the departed;—it has its Lares, or favorite family standards; it has its Penates, or its own selection from the idols or authorities of the people. These influences exist in the highest home and in the humblest—are to be traced in the old nobilities, whose caste, party, and creed, are fixed by the allegiance of a thousand years, and in the unpretending villager who thinks himself highly favored in ancient lore, as he reads in his family Bible the name and birth of his grandfather. Nor are the same influences wholly wanting to those who wish to repudiate their ancestry, the spendthrift upstarts of fortune, whose crest, manufactured to order, is but an attempt to hide the only honorable fact in the family history, that one ancestor was a plain, industrious man, with energy enough to earn by his trade the wealth that heirs squander in folly. Generally, it needs little antiquarian study to learn the ruling genius of the

\* See our Book Notices.

house. It is not only in the house of Atreus or Oedipus, or in the line of the Stuarts and the Bourbons, that family griefs have their succession, and a thread of tragedy runs through their whole history. Every family is troubled with its besetting sorrows and sins. No man is wise until he understands his own pedigree, and interprets himself, not simply as an isolated fact in the world, but as a branch of the life-tree upon which he grew. If reflection does not inform the family of its peculiar traits, experience will not fail to make the revelation. The idle chat of the house will often exhibit the ruling spirit, and the prattle of many a lisping child betrays the idols that he has been trained to honor. Some names of folly or wisdom most frequent on the lips alike of parents and children, will be the household words that show the spirit that predominates. These names, and all attendant influences, are to be judged by their bearing on the true aims of home. Ask a few plain questions as the Master asks in the appeals of his religion.

Does content live with us, or its opposite, discontent ? The question cannot be answered by any general considerations of fortune or position. Surely discontent is found in the most extreme cases, and wealth feels often very poor and limited because its desires rise with its means, and its means may be distanced far by some more successful aspirant to fortune. Discontent, ready guest of heart and home always, but never more frequent than among us with whom plenty so swells desire, and competition so quickens rivalry ! With us, alas, too frequent guest, impoverishing abundance by inordinate desires, and burdening too many with cares and anxieties beyond reason and beyond strength ! Often sad effect of our lux-

urious civilization, that in apparently the greater number of households, property brings new forms of want, and the demands of ostentation become more rapacious than the natural appetite! How many need now and always to lower their vain pride, and dignify their mediocrity, or consecrate their affluence, by hearing the Master's voice, "Come down : to-day I must abide in thy house."

In some especial form the spirit of discontent is apt to tempt every household, in view of some especial want, or vanity, or ambition. With it, too, come some elements of strife, or indifference, or worldiness, that need peculiar watching. Domestic life, indeed, is sacred from prying curiosity, and it argues generally little to one's credit, to be very accurately posted up in the accounts of home troubles. Without playing the part of the busybody, we may study the facts of human nature, and be aware of the developments of society. We may believe, that where several wills are brought together, they can harmonize only as they agree by appealing to a common standard ; that no tempers, however pliant, can accord without mutual principle ; that none in authority can govern others without first governing themselves ; that a Christian spirit, earnest, kindly, devoted, is the only safeguard of the peace and elevation of the home.

What to many seems the very genius of household comfort, an easy, pleasant worldliness, is a wretched dependence, and will serve one very little in bearing up against the trials of affliction, or the dangers of prosperity. Worldliness may furnish a house, but it needs more, far more, to make a home. Too often the very spirit that prides itself upon crowding the house with magnificence, robs it of every true home grace. Whatever may be the

show of hospitality, there is no good cheer for an earnest heart, nothing that returns the Christian benediction, "Peace be with this house." Too often what is called by eminence, "society" has not one truly social element. We read that some years ago, when the button-makers of England were in distress, the Court relieved them at once by directing four extra buttons to be added to the coat tails of approved mode. A refined traveller from France, Germany, or even England, might suppose that most of our American city society had originated in some such benevolent purpose, and our usual style of party giving had its origin in a movement for the relief of confectioners, dancing-masters, dressmakers, and liquor dealers, so monstrous is our outlay of money in their line, and so feeble our sense of artistic beauty and conversational zest. No less a guest than he who went with the Publican is needed to give the true grace, and as Christ has been reverently and affectionately received, homes have abounded.

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## REMEMBRANCE OF THE LORD.

ANONYMOUS.

THE words of our Saviour's request are "*this do in remembrance of me.*" I suppose that every one will admit, that Jesus intended to express, in these words, his earnest and affectionate desire, that the little band of disciples, then seated around him, should, after his death, repeat the act of partaking of bread and wine, in order to cherish the remembrance of him in their hearts. I presume that every reader of this article would say, "had I been one of

that little band,—had I heard the words “this do in remembrance of me,” under the circumstances in which the disciples were then placed, I should have felt myself under the most solemn obligations to observe, most carefully, ever after, that most tender, touching, dying request.” I need not multiply words, then, in proof of my first proposition, that Jesus expressed his most earnest and affectionate desire that the disciples, then with him, should observe this rite, after his death, in order to cherish the remembrance of him in their hearts.

Jesus intended his request for all who might become his followers in all ages of the Church. On this point there is a diversity of opinion. There are those, who believe that the request of Jesus was addressed particularly to those then before him, and that it was not intended by the Saviour himself that the observance of the Supper should be perpetual. From this view I dissent. I sincerely believe that Christ intended and desired that all his true followers, in all ages of the Church, should observe the ordinance of the Supper. And I believe too that if this question be once decided, the whole matter will be settled. For, if we believe that Jesus earnestly and affectionately desires all his followers to observe this ordinance, then, most surely, shall we as his disciples, promptly comply with his wishes, by seating ourselves at the table of remembrance.

My first reason for believing that Christ intended the observance of the Supper to be perpetual is this,—I believe that the immediate disciples of the Lord Jesus, his chosen apostles, knew, better than we can know, what were his views and feelings, his desires and intentions, upon this subject. The circumstances in which they were placed,

were such as to favor their obtaining this better knowledge. They were with Jesus, both before and after his resurrection, and, consequently, they enjoyed opportunities of becoming fully acquainted with all his views and feelings upon this, as upon other subjects. They enjoyed opportunities of conversing with him, after his resurrection. And we know not but they might have conversed with him upon this very subject, and learned from his own lips his wishes in regard to it. It would have been natural that they should have done so. But, to say the least, you must admit that the immediate disciples of Christ were better qualified than we are to judge correctly of the views and feelings of their Master upon this subject.

But we know that the immediate disciples of Christ, his chosen apostles, did not confine the observance of this ordinance to the limited number of their own little band. They administered it to those who were converted by them, to those who through them believed in the Lord Jesus. From this fact, we are authorized to conclude that the apostles honestly believed that Jesus intended that the observance of the ordinance of the Supper should pass beyond the little band who surrounded him at the time of its institution, and consequently, that he intended that his request should be observed by all who might become his followers, in all ages of the Church. For, if you extend the observance at all beyond the immediate disciples, if you admit a single individual not of their number, you destroy the position that it was to be confined to the apostles themselves. There was no more propriety in connecting the immediate converts of the apostles with the apostles themselves, in the observance of this ordinance, than there is in our observing it, if it was not intended to be perpe-

tual. The apostles, then, by their conduct in administering this ordinance to their immediate successors, declared, in the most emphatic manner, their honest belief, that the request of the Saviour, "this do in remembrance of me," was intended by him not to be confined to their own little band, but to be transmitted by them to all who through their words might believe on the Lord Jesus.

This general conclusion is confirmed, I think, by the particular testimony of Paul, in his Epistle to the Corinthians. You will bear in mind the occasion of his alluding to the subject. The Corinthians had made the observance of the Supper an occasion of rioting and drunkenness. Paul in writing to them upon the subject uses the following language,—"*For I have received of the Lord Jesus that, which I also delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread, and, when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner, he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, this cup is the New Testament in my blood. This do, as oft as ye drink it in remembrance of me. For, as oft as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show forth the Lord's death till he come.*" In regard to this language of the apostle, you will observe that it indicates the fact, that the Corinthians were in the practice of observing the Supper, and that Paul, who professes to have received his instructions from Christ, did not object to their observing it. He did not say "this rite was not intended, as I have received from the Lord, to be perpetual, and therefore you need not longer observe it." On the contrary, he gives them an account of its institution, in order that they might



understand its nature, and be prepared for a more acceptable observance of it. And does not the course, which the apostle pursued, clearly imply that he honestly believed that Christ intended the ordinance of the Supper for perpetual observance? The conclusion to which I have thus been led, is confirmed by other and more general considerations. Suppose that this question, of the perpetuity of the ordinance of the Supper, had been agitated in the days of the apostles, and that, in some one of their epistles, they had declared in so many words, that Christ did not intend that this observance should be confined to the little band of his immediate disciples, but that it should be handed down by them to their successors. Would not such a declaration, in words, have decided the question? But does not the conduct of the disciples, in actually administering the Supper to their successors, speak to the same effect, more clearly, and more distinctly even, than any words, they might have used, could possibly have done? Is it not a proverbial maxim, that "actions speak louder than words?"

Again, suppose that the apostles had not administered this ordinance to their successors, and that the question were now agitated in regard to the right interpretation of the language of the Saviour upon this subject. Would not the fact that the apostles did not administer this ordinance to their successors, be adduced as conclusive proof that they did not believe that our Saviour intended it to be perpetual, and would not this inference, drawn from the fact of their not having administered it, be regarded as perfectly satisfactory? Most certainly it would have been so regarded. And is not the inference drawn from the fact that they did administer it equally as conclusive, equally as satisfactory?

Still further, would not the same course of argument, which would set aside the perpetuity of the ordinance of the Supper, have equal force and appropriateness in setting aside the perpetual obligation of every other command, which Christ has given? Just try it. Our Saviour says "Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you." Here is a practical injunction of our Saviour. But it was addressed more particularly to his immediate disciples. It might have been a mere maxim of prudence, adapted to their peculiar condition, and called forth by peculiar circumstances in which they were placed. They were surrounded by inveterate foes, and were exposed to bitter persecution. They were but few in number, and by provoking the anger of their enemies might hasten on their own destruction. There was then a special reason why such a command should be given to them. But we are in a very different situation. There is no particular reason of prudence or of policy why such a command should be addressed to us. May we not conclude, therefore, that this command to love our enemies was not intended to be perpetually observed? In this way, you perceive that the same course of argument, which would set aside the perpetuity of the ordinance of the Supper, will have the same force, in setting aside other commands of the Saviour, as limited in their application to his immediate disciples.

There are two or three other considerations, bearing upon the same point, which I would briefly state. And first, I believe there is an inherent naturalness and propriety in this observance. We value our civil liberty. And is it not natural, is it not proper, to unite in some

distinct and appropriate commemorative services, in order to cherish the remembrance of what it cost our fathers, and to deepen our own estimate of its value? And is it not the same in regard to any particular benefactor? And are not such services in perfect accordance with the purest promptings of the heart? Nay more, are they not in perfect accordance with the soundest dictates of enlightened reason? Do not these outward acts serve to keep alive and to deepen the feelings which give rise to them? Jesus, in adaptation to this tendency of our natures, has appointed the ordinance of the Supper, as a commemorative service, in which we may unite for the purpose of cherishing an affectionate remembrance of him,—for the purpose of expressing and of deepening our gratitude to him. The inherent naturalness and propriety of the ordinance, then, constitute an additional reason why christians should unite in its observance.

Still further, in your attempts to lead a religious life, you find yourself weak. Your good purposes are soon forgotten, your good resolutions are often broken, your holy, devout and heavenward aspirations are often drawn down to earth. You have undoubtedly found, therefore, that, if you would lead a truly religious life, you must surround yourself with all available good influences. But here is an ordinance, the proper observance of which, is adapted to throw around you the holiest influences. Will you, then, neglect such an ordinance? Will you forego these influences, so pure and so powerful? This ordinance was instituted for the very purpose, among other reasons, of strengthening you in your weakness. Will you despise the assistance which your Saviour has provided? Your weakness, then, in all holy efforts, and your

need of assistance, is still another reason why you should avail yourself of the observance of this ordinance as a help to your piety.

Once more, Christ has enjoined upon his disciples the duty of confessing him before their fellow-men, in other words, the duty of openly avowing their belief in, and their devotion to him. This may be done in different ways. And it is, in some degree, done by openly uniting in the support of, and in attendance upon Christian worship. Still, at the present day, the observance of the Supper is generally regarded as the most decided and distinct avowal of our faith in, and our devotion to Christ. It is so understood by the community, it is so felt by the individual. And this constitutes still another reason why Christians should unite in the observance of this ordinance.

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## A CHAPTER FOR CHILDREN.

### MY SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS.

AN, I see the laughing blue eyes, which are peeping into this rather grave looking volume, turning over this page, and that, now stopping to glance at the poetry, then spelling out some big word, and at last throwing it aside with an impatient sigh, and a wish that there could be something for you in a snug corner of mamma's book, and this time there shall be if you will listen to me a little while.

Are you a Sunday scholar; if so, I know you would like to be introduced to my little class, and to hear some stories about them. I must take you to a large old fashioned church, entirely surrounded with a thick grove of locusts, whose light and feathery foliage, waved with every

breeze ; there, after the morning service, were gathered together all the children of the parish, young and old ; they were for the most part arranged in pews, but my class, the younglings of the flock, were seated on a long bench near the door. They were too small to join in the general exercise, and I therefore had them as far removed as possible from the rest of the school. Fourteen there were, bright, roguish, merry things, some two or three, demure as little pussys, though as confiding as possible, you would have laughed to have seen them, their eyes twinkling with mirth, while their mouths were drawn down to look as quiet and sober as possible.

There were all varieties in disposition and appearance. I cannot tell you about them all, but a few words of some of the most interesting will make you feel quite as if you had shaken hands with them. It was a dear little circle to be the centre of, and I delighted in the holy Sabbath hour, which gave me for a time, however short, the opportunity of imprinting on these pure young souls some truth or divine precept.

Little Lizzie B. was the pet of the whole class ; she was a bright intelligent thing, and so right minded and truthful, no one could help loving her. Her short lesson was always well learned, and the fragments of the stories she had heard read during the week were very interesting as they came from her lisping lips, for she could hardly yet speak plain. Her anxiety to do right, and her willingness to confess her faults, were constantly shown in the class. One day I was talking to them about the duty of kindness to one another, that the golden rule of doing to others as we would have them do to us, should be the rule with all, it was the only way to make ourselves and those around

us happy. I saw while I was speaking that Lizzie's earnest little face was turned to me so full of expression, and thought, I knew that she had something she wished to say.

"What is it, Lizzie?" I asked. She drew close to me, rested her head upon me, and said,

"Oh, once I did something so naughty to Susie, and afterwards I felt so sorry, I went away where nobody could see me, and whipped myself."

I could hardly help smiling at the sweet ingenuousness of the child, but I wished to make her feel that that was not the true way to show her regret; and I said, "Did you remember in your little prayer that night, to ask your Father in Heaven to forgive you for what you had done wrong; and did you tell Susie you were sorry, and would try not to do so again?"

"Oh, no," she replied; "I did not think of that."

"Then, the next time you know you do wrong, you must remember these things. If it has been towards Susie, you have probably made her unhappy, and you must go to her, and putting your cheek to her's, and taking her hand in your's, whisper, 'Dear Susie, will you forgive me; I know I was wrong; I was selfish, but I will try not to be so again; please help me try Susie.'" Then she would have kissed you, with her whole heart, and the cloud would have passed away, and you would have felt happier than you did, after you had punished yourself."

As I finished, and looked at Lizzie, I saw the tears swimming in her soft, blue eyes, and with her voice trembling with emotion, she said, "Oh, I will remember it another time."

There was one of my little ones who delighted to tell tales of her companions. She was anxious to be first in

her class, and her lessons were always perfect ; but she seemed to think she raised herself by lowering her playmates, and every day I had to check her for it ; but no gentle refusing to listen to her stories would put her down, and this unamiable trait made her dreaded and disliked by all the little circle. One day I was trying to teach her by a general lesson to the class, how very wrong it was to indulge such a habit — how ungenerous it was to tell of the faults of one's companions — and just as I said this, dear Lizzie, looking up in my face with her pleading eyes, said,

“ It is not wrong, is it, if our parents tell us we must ? ”

I replied, “ No ; it is our duty always to obey them in all things.”

“ Why, then, this morning, Susie pushed me out of bed, and papa had told me, if she ever did so, I must tell him, and so I did.”

“ Did you first ask Susie not to do it, and tell her if she did, you must go and tell papa ? ”

The little face was cast down, and the deep blush of mortification and regret covered it, for Lizzie knew in her own heart that she had been rather glad to complain of Susie ; but I am sure, from the expression of the face, she will not be so ready to do it again ; she will not again run to her father or mother with a tale of Susie's misdemeanors, till she has tried herself to make her do right.

And shall it not be so with you, little readers ? Will you not learn this lesson from dear little Lizzie B., never to tell tales of your companions, but try by your own example and loving words to lead them to do what is right ; and also learn to obey the golden rule, “ To do unto others as you would have others do to you.”

## BOOK NOTICES.

**THE HEARTH-STONE.** *Thoughts upon Home Life in Cities.* By Samuel Osgood; author of "Studies in Christian Biography," &c. New York: D. Appleton & Co. Sold in Montreal, by B. Dawson, Place d'Armes. A VERY genial volume, excellent in its aim, elevating in its tendency, cheerfully religious in its tone, and dedicated "to those who have ever loved home, and who wish to love it always." Some eighteen distinct essays are here collected together, written in Mr. Osgood's most graceful style, and connected into a proper whole by their common reference to home affairs and affections. Here will be found thoughts relating to parents and children, brothers and sisters, masters and servants, and last, but not least, a chapter concerning the Church in the House. An extract from the book, entitled, "What are the Household Gods?" will be found in a previous page of our present number.

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**COMMUNION THOUGHTS.** By S. G. Bulfinch, author of "Lays of the Gospel." Second Edition. Boston: Crosby, Nichols & Co.

MR. BRYSON, of St. Francois Xavier Street, has received a fresh supply of this devout and instructive manual. Its purpose will be best explained by the following sentences from the author's advertisement. "There are many in our congregations who are withheld from participating in the communion, by causes which a fair consideration of the subject would be likely to remove. There are others probably, who unite in the ordinance from a sense of duty, but to whom it is not so interesting and improving as it ought to be, through the difficulty of directing the current of the thoughts, and developing the religious feelings. This little volume is an attempt to meet, in some humble degree, the spiritual wants of these two classes." We cordially recommend Mr. Bulfinch's little work to the attention both of communicants and non-communicants.