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Bibles as Bibles have a larger place in Sunday-school instruction than ten years ago, or than twenty-five years ago. The International system of lesson-study has promoted an intelligent interest in the Bible as a book, as in contrast with the old-time interest in the catechism or the question-book as an index of doctrine or of fact derived from the Bible. Never before were Bibles as generally as now in the hands of the teachers and the scholars in the Sunday-schools of the United States. If, indeed, there is one Sunday-school or another where the Bible does not have its proper prominence, it would be well for the pastor or superintendent of that school to see to it that his charge is brought into line, on this point, with good Sunday-schools generally.

Prayer is one of the wonders of the universe. The idea that man's feeble breath, as prompted by a loving, trusting heart, can influence the Power that directs and controls all the forces of nature, and that shapes the course and destinies of individuals and of nations, is a conception too vast for the compass of unaided human reason. A child-like faith is essential

to its grasping. Yet the potency of prayer is a verity as unmistakable as the sun in the heavens; and the true-hearted child of God is not surer of his own existence than that his Father hears and answers his prayers, according to his need and his faith. Because of the wonderfulness of the power of prayer, an un-failing interest attaches to the subject of prayer itself, in its nature, its conditions, its limitations, and its involvings. In connection with the Bible lesson on Abraham's intercession for Sodom, two articles on the subject of prayer are before our readers this week, by well-known and ever-welcome contributors to these pages. Bishop Huntington treats one phase of the subject, and President Bascom another. Thoughts will be quickened and hearts warmed by the suggestions of both writers on this important theme.

System is a good servant, but a poor master. A man who has no thought of system in his daily life is likely to use his time and strength to little advantage. But a man who gives the chief place to system in his daily life, is likely to limit his labors to the routine demands of his system. No man is of practical efficiency in life who could not conform himself to a system, if it were necessary. Nor is any man of the highest practical efficiency who will conform himself unvaryingly to a system. The man who will rise at a certain hour every morning, and will retire at a certain hour every night, and will have his meals at certain hours every day, and will do all his work in a certain order and in a certain way, is as valuable as a cuckoo-clock in calling the hours for those who want to know and to improve their passing time. But such a man is worth little for an emergency, and is quite incompetent to meet the special and extra requirement of such exceptional days as are continually thrusting themselves into every busy man's life-time. The man who always answers every letter as soon as he receives it, and whose desk is never out of order when he leaves it at the close of the day, may be a model of perfectness as a human automaton; but he is not the man to do the chief thing of importance for the present hour, even at the cost of letting matters of minor importance remain unattended to. It is better to do one's duty of the moment, whatever else is left undone, than to have one's duty of the moment decided for him by a prearranged programme, in spite of providential calls to other and nobler service.

One of the perplexing geographical questions of the Bible narrative is as to the site of the Cities of the Plain; those cities which come into prominence in the record of Chedorlaomer's campaign, and which are afterwards visited with destruction by a special judgment of God. There was a time when it was thought that the waters of the Dead Sea covered the site of these cities; but that idea was long ago shown to be fallacious. Eminent specialists in Bible geography have insisted that the true site was at the southern end of the Dead Sea, while equally eminent specialists have insisted that it was at the northern end. There are certainly strong reasons for supposing that Sodom was at the south of the Dead Sea; yet the reasons for locating Gomorrah at the north of that Sea are not less weighty. Hitherto it has been taken for granted that the five cities lay very near to each other; hence that the site of one would deter-

mine the neighborhood of the others. A few years ago, however, Mr. Trelawney Saunders, an eminent English geographer, who was engaged upon the cartography of the Palestine Survey, made the suggestion that the five Cities of the Plain (or of the 'Arabah, or Jordan Valley, as the Hebrew really indicates) were not clustered about a common centre, but were at various points along that Valley, on the eastern border of Canaan. This theory, which is worthy of more attention than it has thus far received, is newly stated by Mr. Saunders on another page. It is certainly more reasonable to suppose that the border defenses of Canaan, which are named as along the eastern boundary of that land, and which were the object of Chedorlaomer's campaign of subjugation, were at the principal fording-points of the Jordan, than to suppose that they were at a single point, either north or south of the Dead Sea. Mr. Saunders is the author of a valuable Introduction to the Survey of Western Palestine; and he arranged maps of that survey showing its water-basins. He has recently retired from the position of Hydrographer of the India House.

INCLINATION AS A HINDRANCE TO SUCCESS.

Unless a man has his heart in his work, he is not worth much for that work. Yet not every man can have his heart in the same kind of work. One man can give his whole heart only to one line of service, and another man only to another line of service. Either of these men would be out of place, and comparatively useless, in the sphere of the other. The success of either pivots on his being where he belongs. How to find one's real place and work in the world is, therefore, a question of practical moment for one's self and for those whom one is set to control or to counsel. A widely prevalent thought on this subject is, that one's natural or one's acquired inclination in a certain direction is an indication of probable success in that direction—under favorable conditions. Yet, as a matter of fact, an inclination is more likely to be a hindrance than a help to success—in the direction of that inclining. And true gain in life ordinarily comes through resisting one's inclinations, rather than through following them.

An inclination is a natural or an acquired tendency, rather than an intelligent purpose. And with human nature as it is, one's tendencies are toward personal ease, rather than toward personal discomfort; toward personal indulgence, rather than toward personal constraint. One naturally inclines to do that which he can do with small effort, rather than to undertake that which will tax his utmost energies; and the longer one follows his inclinations, the more difficult it is for him to break away in another direction. Yet it is obvious that activity and struggle and self-denial are essential to the developing of one's powers, and to one's attainment of any high success in the world. Hence it is that inclination may prove a barrier to success, and that at the best it is a peril and a hindrance in one's life-course.

If, indeed, a young person inclines to over-eat, or to over-sleep, or to mope listlessly through the day, or to fly about in aimless motion, every parent or teacher recognizes the fact that that person ought to be trained away from his inclinations, rather than in their direc-

the publisher, in paper covers at fifteen cents, and in cloth at twenty-five cents, postage paid.

BOOKS AND WRITERS.

PATRISTIC LITERATURE AND ITS GREATEST EXPONENT.*

In a new edition of *The Confessions and Letters of St. Augustin*, with a sketch of his life and work, we have the opening volume of what seems to be the most promising attempt that has yet been made to give the English reader a competent notion of the literature of the best patristic age. This enterprise is under the competent editorship of Dr. Schaff; and it fittingly supplements the admirable edition of *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, as edited by Bishop Coxe. Other such undertakings have been limited, either by the intrusion of some party purpose in the selection of the works to be translated, or by a less broad outlook over the field. But if this Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers should be carried through the two series that are proposed, it will furnish a not inadequate conspectus of the best literature of the most important patristic period. The value of such a body of writings is apt to be much underestimated. Nothing can more strikingly illustrate the narrowness of our present educational methods than the neglect of all church history on the one side, and the undigested contempt with which the writings of the Fathers are regarded on the other. Yet, as it is becoming recognized that church history cannot be adequately understood save as a branch of world history, so, on the other hand, it may be most emphatically asserted that general or secular history (most pointedly since the coming of Christ) cannot be understood at all without a broad and deep knowledge of church history,—that this is the spinal cord that runs through all the years, and about which all else is disposed into an organic whole. And the prevalent way of teaching the history of literature,—as if all the early Christian centuries from Augustus to the Renaissance were a blank, in which literature at the best had languished, and as if the classical writers were then raised from the dead to beget modern letters directly, and with no inheritance from a past of more than a thousand years,—is but the offspring of the secularization of modern education, and it indicates an ignorance at once of the richness of patristic literature and of the organic growth of all literature.

"There is, perhaps, no literature in the world," exclaims Professor Adolf Harnack, "which is still so little scientifically investigated as the patristic; and yet, what high significance it has! It became, when it stepped into the place of the ancient heathen literature, like the maternal bosom for all the literatures of the Latin and Germanic peoples." These words must sound strange in the ears of those who have been taught from childhood to believe nothing to be worthy of their notice from the silver Latin to miraculous Dante. But Dr. Harnack continues, even more specifically: "The patristic literature is nothing less than the continuance of the ancient classical literature, but under the control of the two Testaments. The ancient heathen literature died out in the fourth and fifth centuries, so that at length nothing remained but the Catholic. But this, which had taken into itself every element in the ancient still retaining any vitality, had now fused into innermost union within itself the gospel and the spirit of Greek and Roman antiquity. Whatever the German people have received of spiritual good, the inheritance of antiquity and the inheritance of Christianity, they have received through the patristic literature." In a word, all modern literature descends by natural generation from the patristic, and all the deflection it may have received from the revival of the old classical spirit at the Renaissance, or the growth of the modern feeling, cannot avail to break this bond; nor should it shrink from recognizing an ancestor of which it need so little be ashamed.

If on every account, then, it is high time for us to become better acquainted with patristic literature, it is equally well that Dr. Schaff has chosen Augustin as the first of the fathers to introduce to us. That "man of true greatness and stupendous genius,"—as Leibnitz, looking back upon him as one philosopher upon another, calls him,—towers above his contemporaries as a peer of the greatest thinkers of the world. In almost a hundred

separate works he poured forth an inexhaustible stream of lofty thought, acute dialectic, and burning eloquence. He was careless of style; and yet no ancient writer has given the world a greater store of pithy proverbs. If he be viewed as a philosophical thinker, he must be placed by the side of Aristotle. If he be considered as a devotional writer, he ranks with Thomas à Kempis and John Bunyan. If he be estimated by the strength and permanence of his influence among men, he has had no superior and few equals among all the writers of all time. He dominates all subsequent time as the uninspired fountain of theology. To him, scholastic and mystic, Romanist and Protestant, Ultramontane and Jansenist, Lutheran and Calvinist, alike turn back their eyes in reverence; and from him the streams flow that have irrigated into its best fertility every field of theological thought.

The present volume happily brings together just those writings of Augustin which give an insight into the very centre of this great heart and mind. It has been said that the *Confessions* of Augustin are emphatically not an autobiography, and there is a sense in which this is true; but in another and higher sense it may be equally truly said that they emphatically are the most sincere, the most "inner," and the most complete autobiography ever penned. They are the confessions of a full heart, not so much to men as before God,—that God, to confess our sins to whom is to confess our praise for their healing. As such they busy themselves but little with the outer life, although their value even in this sphere may easily be underestimated; but they lay open to God's eye and to the gaze of every spiritual man the very core of the inner life, and write the biography of the soul. The reality of the experiences here described is as self-evidencing as the reality of the experiences that Paul describes to us in the seventh chapter of the *Romans*, or of Christian's in the *Pilgrim's Progress*. That everywhere the glowing expressions of devotion are shot through with the puzzles of metaphysical thought, is only an additional proof of the utter truthfulness of the picture here drawn of an essentially philosophical mind. No doubt this is a phenomenon without complete parallel in all literature, although it is somewhat distantly resembled by such a book as Sir Thomas Browne's *Religio Medici*, wherein the author appears to be also one who loves to pose his understanding with the difficulties of faith, and is never satisfied until he loses himself in a mystery, and has pursued his reason to an *O altitudo!*—not because his faith is weak, but because it is strong, and he can answer all the objections of a rebellious reason with that odd resolution he learned of Tertullian: "It is certain, because it is impossible." But not in Bunyan, nor in Sir Thomas Browne, nor anywhere, save perhaps in the *Confessions* of Rousseau, are the experiences of a sinful soul exposed in such full and unshrinking detail as here. Yet what a gulf yawns between the two "*Confessions*!" In the one, the wound only is showed; in the other, it is the thanks to the physician for the healing alone that occupies the mind. Both say, "I wish to call to mind my past foulnesses and the carnal corruptions of my soul." But there Rousseau stops, and because he stops there he has corrupted the world. Augustin alone continues: "Not because I love them, but in order that I may love thee, my God! It is for love of thee that I do this; recalling my most vicious ways in the exceeding bitterness of my remembrance, that thou mayest become sweet to me, O sweetness without deception, O sweetness happy and secure!" Exceeding bitter are such remembrances to him; he looks into the pit out of which he was dug only that he may shudder the closer into the sheltering arms of his Saviour. And thus it happens that those confessions endure as the great model of Christian self-examination, and that the breath that blows from them exalts and ennobles the soul.

If the "*Confessions*" open the heart of the saint as he opens it only before God, the "*Letters*" paint us a complete picture of the man in the midst of his friends. And what a busy, thoughtful, multifarious life is here laid before us! There is scarcely a subject of the heart or of the head that is not touched upon; and the letters range all the way from brief notes of mere politeness to elaborate treatises on the origin of the soul, and even more elaborate expositions of Scripture. So many sided, so packed with thought, are they, that Poujoulat, a French critic of eminence, permits himself to say that, if nothing else remained to us of Augustin, "we should still have all his doctrine, all his genius: the letters of St. Augustin are the whole of St. Augustin." The volume already published does not contain quite all of them; but it contains all of the most important, and quite enough to enable the reader to read himself into the saint's life. Taken in connection with the "*Confessions*," they give us a view of the greatest of the Fathers, which for fullness and

accuracy may be made to compare favorably with our knowledge of our familiar friends.

This first volume of the new series is attractive in its appearance, being well printed in clear type. The translation, which is that of the Edinburgh edition of Augustin's works, is clear and good, although occasionally lacking in nervousness and grace. The second volume of the series is to contain the most important and systematic of Augustin's theological treatises, and, after it, successive volumes will gradually unfold the breadth of his genius. Augustin is to be followed by selections from the most eloquent orator of the Greek Church, golden-mouthed Chrysostom.

RECENT ART PUBLICATIONS.*

The appearance of Mr. Elihu Vedder's elaborate series of illustrations for the *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*, in 1884, stimulated American artists and publishers to attempt a similar success. In 1885 we had Mr. Will H. Low's pictures for Keats's *Lamia*; and in 1886, besides the two elaborate works mentioned in the foot-note, came *The Book of American Figure-Painters* (Lippincott) and *The Book of the Tile-Club* (Houghton). Mr. Hopkinson Smith's illustrations for Holmes's *Last Leaf*, and his *Well-Worn Roads*, though less ambitious, were nevertheless art-essays of considerable interest.

Rossetti's *Blessed Damsel* is one of the most significant poems of recent years. Intended as a counterpart or answer to Poe's *Raven*, it represents a sensuous heaven with all the art of new-medievalism. It therefore tempts the illustrator, and yet makes his task a hard one. Mr. Kenyon Cox has recognized an opportunity, but failed to meet it. His figures nearly always suggest the New York models whom the artist employed. Spirituality is constantly lacking; and even physical attractiveness, for which Rossetti sought, is not successfully portrayed. Mr. Cox's "*Ars Poetica*" actually seems drawn from a lay-figure, with its usual distraught woodenness. These much-praised illustrations, in a word, seem to indicate promise, rather than achievement; they are an essay toward a result which Mr. Cox may reach in after years, when his execution shall be more mature, and shall be dominated by a high power of poetic insight.

The unfavorable impression made by Mr. Cox's book is deepened by the pictures themselves, on exhibition in the American Art Galleries, New York. In the same galleries are the original drawings made by Mr. Edwin A. Abbey for Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer*, which have appeared in Harper's Magazine within the past few years, and were put into a costly volume last Christmas. They are bright, fresh, versatile, and amusing, indicating a ready sympathy and a quick—often to a quick and apparently careless—touch. The photogravure reproductions are better than the "process-work" copies of Mr. Abbey's outline drawings. Pictures, in mere line, reproduced by process, have injuriously multiplied in France of late. Mr. Abbey manages them well, but they encourage his worst fault, that of haste. The result is therefore a pretty book, rather than a work of high art.

The most important American art periodical since the death of *The American Art Review*, edited by Messrs. Koehler, Prime, and Perkins, has appeared in New York (George F. Kelly, 59 Carmine Street). The two first numbers are full of good work, in text and pictures. Whistler, novelty in American art, the art-poverty of New York, American monuments, lettering as decoration, and rural architecture, are among the subjects treated by competent writers; while each number contains four full-page illustrations—one etching, and three photogravures. Of those thus far issued, the best are Mr. Church's dainty conceit, *Dreamers*; Mr. Alexander Harrison's solemn seaside picture, *Evening*; and a photogravure of the statue called *First Dream of Love*, by young Edward Thaxter, of Portland, who died at twenty-four. The periodical seems almost too good to live, for it is hard to start so costly an undertaking; but it deserves a long career.

A learned set of lectures on *The Rise and Early Constitution of Universities* forms the third volume in Dr. William T. Harris's new *International Education Series*. The author is Professor S. S. Laurie of the University of Edinburgh. "The development of mediæval education" is a phrase that might fitly describe the general theme of Professor Laurie's volume. It conveniently summarizes and restates the contents or conclusions of many works, inaccessible to the majority of readers; and it

* A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church. Edited by Philip Schaff, D.D., LL.D., Vol. I. *The Confessions and Letters of St. Augustin*, with a sketch of his life and work. Buffalo: The Christian Literature Company, 1886. Large 8vo, pp. x, 619, double column. Price, \$2.00 a volume. Sold only by subscription.

* *The Blessed Damsel*. By Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Illustrated by Kenyon Cox. New York: Dodd, Mead, and Co. Price, \$15.00. *She Stoops to Conquer*. By Dr. Goldsmith. Illustrated by Edwin A. Abbey. New York: Harper and Brothers. Price, \$20.00. *The Art Review*. November and December, 1886. New York: George F. Kelly. Price of each, 50 cents.