

Again, viewed from yet another aspect, the Bible is peculiarly a children's history book. For is it not the history of a child race, told by inspired men with child-like minds, and a child's outlook on life. It cannot be repeated too often that the Old Testament is the history of the children (and they were children in very truth), of God. God was their Father, their Teacher, and their Guide, and He had to punish, forgive, and overlook many things, just as an earthly father forgives and forgets the shortcomings of his children. The history of David, to an adult mind, is full of weakness, and childish wilfulness. Ofttimes we cannot admire even his good points, because of the predominance of his weaknesses. And how often God's patience and tolerance seem to have been expended in vain; and we fail to realise what the child mind would grasp at once, that David's weaknesses were natural ones in a child, for that was all he was, and had God been less patient, less good, he would be a Being worthy of far less love and reverence than an earthly father, who, if he loves well enough, forgives all things to his little children. David fell into temptation, and forgot his God over and over again in what must seem to a mature mind a wilfully senseless manner. And yet God forgave. A child would expect forgiveness, and would be wounded if it did not get it. Idolatry to a thinking mind seems such an impossible sin for anyone who had ever known Jehovah, but a child knows from its own experience that it often loves its dolls or toys more for the moment than mother and father, and the idols were dolls, so why should not these children of the Old Testament make the same mistakes that children make to-day? We could multiply instance upon instance where the child-race commits childish sins and exhibits childish weakness, and is forgiven. Would these stories not appeal to children all the more because they are their own every day experiences? God is always just, yet merciful, and faithfully loving and tender. The God of the Old Testament is essentially the children's God. Ought we not, therefore, to let the little ones know Him and learn of Him from the best record of His dealings with men? Again, it is the old command we obey or reject when we accept or refuse

Bible teaching for our children, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me."

On the point of local colour and atmosphere the Bible cannot fail to satisfy the most severe critic. It is written by men who were contemporaries of the events which they describe; men, who were the poet philosophers of the ages in which they lived, and who were abundantly gifted with the rich imagination of Eastern races. Every sentence is a picture, and he who fails to grasp the colourings is indeed obtuse, for in such wealth of imagery, and such abundance of allegory, not only are we furnished with local colour and atmosphere, but we are at the very fountain-head of inspiration, and the dullest mind is unconsciously inspired to imitate. These writings could with all justice be named the "education and imagination." Thus we find, that as an historical work, the Bible satisfies all demands.

The third and the most important standpoint from which we must consider the Bible is its value as a mentally and a morally stimulating influence. It will be generally admitted that it is essential in educating the child, and in forming its character to place before it the highest ideals within the scope of human conception. What is the highest ideal we know, and where shall we find it portrayed? Surely it is the life and teaching of the Christ as portrayed for us in the four Gospels. Everyone who has handled children knows that there is only one key which can open the door of their hearts, just as there is only one foundation on which can be built a truly great character. Love is the key, and purity or singleness of heart the foundation stone. You cannot control children unless you love them; you cannot teach them unless you love. More than this, you cannot give to them any of the true joy of life unless you teach them to love. Love bears fruit in many virtues—unselfishness, courage, patience, and charity are all forms of love. Love is the essential feature in human relations. It renders all things possible to all men. Admitting the value of love, surely our minds must acknowledge with reverence the Author of that grandest of all commands, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." And in teaching the doctrine of love in its best form, surely we can use no

better text book than that which defines the Divinity in the words "God is Love." We would all have our children to be patriots and citizens of the best type. And yet is not the best type embodied in the man or woman who lives up to the command, "Thou shalt Love thy neighbour as thyself"? Those children cannot live up to the command unless they know it, and surely the command will be intensified when they realise how the life of the Author was one grand fulfilment of His doctrine. Abstract goodness and abstract morality make no appeal to children; but if there is one hero, or one heroine, who can embody these virtues they become a possibility to the child, and something to be imitated. Where can you find one so wonderful in all His ways as the Christ, the Lover of little children, the Healer of the sick, and the Friend of the poor? His life teaches fidelity of purpose, singleness of heart, purity of life and thought, and ineffable love, as no life has ever taught them. Is there any one amongst us who would not wish for his son or daughter the matchless courage, the unselfish purpose, and dazzling purity of the Christ? Surely whatever the colour of our belief, and whatever the experience of our life, we still would put before the children the best that we can find! And can we find anything grander or finer than the character of the Son of God? Even if we stand among those who deny His Divinity, surely we cannot but admit His goodness, and closer intimacy with that life and its work must as surely drag from our lips at last the admission of the Roman Centurion, "Surely this was the Son of God." Let us remember that it was He who said, "Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in Me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea." Then, again, ought we not to remember that, though every one of us has to face the Sea of Doubt alone, yet we can give to these young lives weapons and warnings which will help them to ride safely through the roughest storm? Many hearts have had their faith uprooted and their beliefs wrecked by Higher Criticism! and many will question the use of teaching a faith which has to be uprooted and destroyed, and the loss of which leaves the