Queen Margaret College.

THE TEACHING OF SCRIPTURE BY CORRESPONDENCE.

BY MRS. ROBERT JARDINE.

IN these days of female Senior Wranglers, women barristers and doctors, when "Atalanta wins" in the race for fame, we are in danger of overlooking the quiet by-paths by which knowledge may be gained, and possibly "the heights of arts" at length attained. Among these, one of the most important is that system of education by post, which has developed so largely during the last few years. I allude, of course, to the Correspondence Classes, which convey instruction throughout the length and breadth of the land.

These classes are of all kinds; from those conducted under the auspices of associations or colleges, which spare no pains to secure the services of the most highly cultured and able tutors—generally graduates of home or foreign universities—down to those started by private enterprise, with the avowed object of "cramming" the pupils for certain forthcoming examinations.

The Correspondence Classes in connection with Queen Margaret College, Glasgow, certainly belong to the former category. True, the choice of subjects taught is, so far, dependent on the Scheme of the Glasgow University Local Examination Board; but the tutors are men who, while not overlooking the object which many of their pupils have set before them in their work, yet endeavour to make each subject taken up in itself as interesting and as instructive as possible.

In the teaching of Scripture by Correspondence, the method pursued is the same as in other subjects. There are four classes, in which the books prescribed for the Local Examinations in (1) Common, (2) Junior, (3) Senior, and (4) Higher Subjects, respectively, are studied. Last session these books were: (1) St. Mark, (2) St. Luke, (3) 2 Kings, and (4) St. Luke and 1st and 2nd Thessalonians. At the beginning of the session, a plan of study, divided into thirteen lessons, is sent to each pupil, who thus knows exactly what ground is to be gone over each fortnight. A fortnightly paper of questions is received, which, after answering, the pupils send to the tutor. He corrects the answers, adding notes and critical remarks, and the corrected work is returned with the next set of questions. The questions set vary in difficulty, according to the standard reached by the pupils. Knowledge of the words and facts of the Bible is the chief thing looked for in the work of junior pupils; while those more advanced are expected to display more or less scholarship and critical insight. It is pleasant to find that during last

session *earnestness* was the most striking feature of all the work. There can be no better spirit in which to approach such a study, and accordingly the report of the tutor concludes with the following high praise: "Some of the papers have, from the beginning, exhibited quite a remarkable grasp and discrimination, not the mere book knowledge of a specially prepared 'answer,' but the exegetical skill and literary flavour of a real contribution to the study of the subject on hand."

The advantages of this method of Scripture study are not confined to the mere mastering of a given portion of Scripture. Side issues are often opened up, books of reference suggested, perplexing questions of biblical criticism discussed in a manner as reverent as scholarly. Real help may be thus afforded to the Much-afraids and Ready-to-halts, who would otherwise have struggled on, as best they could, too much ashamed of their difficulties to seek to have them removed. More than one earnest searcher after truth has found in these Scripture classes the guidance which she desired. In illustration of this may be quoted a passage from a letter, received some time ago by the late Hon. Sec., Miss J. S. Macarthur. "I remember," says the writer, "long, long ago, making a call alone on Dr. C. to ask him how he thought I should read the Bible, so as to get the fullest benefit from it. He thought that to study it with the help of references was a good plan. I tried that, and was still dissatisfied. I did not know that these Correspondence Classes were to be the answer to my question. I am now satisfied."

A well-known passage in Ruskin's *Sesame and Lilies* declares that theology is the one subject dangerous for women to study, leading them to worship ugly "idols of their own, spiritual dolls, for them to dress according to their own caprice." As yet, however, there has been no evidence among the Scripture correspondence pupils of the tendency against which Ruskin protests. Possibly, it is kept in check by the timely criticisms of that mentor whose praise or blame must be quite impartial; pupils and tutor being, as a rule, only acquainted through the medium of pen and ink. Truly, in this present day of unsettled religious belief, it is well for us all, women as well as men, to learn,

"Fearless and unperplexed,
When we wage battle next,
What weapon to select, what armour to endure."

The next session of the Queen Margaret College Correspondence Classes opens in November. Any one who may think of joining is requested to communicate with the Honorary

Secretary (Mrs. Robert Jardine, 44 Kelvingrove Street, Glasgow, West), who will gladly forward syllabuses, and supply any further information within her power.

The Expository Times Guild of Bible Study.

It has been pointed out to us that longer time should be allowed for the writing of these papers. Examiners also, as experience shows, must have their time extended. Accordingly, we shall present the examiners' reports upon the papers already received in our next issue. Meantime the following subjects are proposed on the same conditions as formerly. That is to say, to the writer of the best paper under any of the divisions, a volume will be sent, such as *Dorner's Ethics*, *Orelli's Isaiah*, or *Jeremiah*, *Ewald's Revelation*, etc. (see THE EXPOSITORY TIMES for June). The papers should not exceed three thousand words. The names of the writers of the best papers will be published, unless they prefer to have it otherwise; in all other cases, only initials or *nom-de-plume*. Papers for next report must be received by 15th September. Any writer may choose more than one subject.

SUBJECTS PROPOSED FOR PAPERS.

I. OLD TESTAMENT EXPOSITION. — 1. Exposition of Psalm viii. 2. The Unity of Isaiah.

II. NEW TESTAMENT EXPOSITION. — 1. The History and Value of the title "Son of Man." 2. Exposition and Application of Hebrews xii. 1, 2.

III. THEOLOGICAL. — The Work of the Holy Spirit on Christ. 2. Clement of Rome.

IV. LITERARY. — 1. A Review of *Lux Mundi*, or a Discussion of one of the Essays. 2. A Review of Boyd Carpenter's *The Permanent Elements of Religion*. 3. How to conduct a Bible Class.

Requests and Replies.

1. A work meeting with the arguments advanced against *Christ's Divinity*.

2. A fair comparison of the religions of the world with Christianity.—E. S.

1. Canon Liddon's Bampton Lectures ("The Divinity of Our Lord:" Rivingtons, 5s.) are the freshest that combine real scholarly criticism with living faith.

2. I don't know one I could thoroughly recommend. If Dr. Dods were not so painfully negative and apologetic, I should say *his* book on that subject (*Mohammed, Buddha, and Christ*: Hodder & Stoughton, 3s. 6d.) would be the thing, because *his accuracy* is to be depended on.—DAVID BROWN.

I have not much access to Commentaries, and should be grateful to have a scholarly exposition of Gen. iv. 7, which in the Revised Version is given thus:—"If thou doest not well, sin coucheth at the door: and unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him."—T. R.

This is a passage of undoubted difficulty. It combines, indeed, two features, each of which is by itself a frequent cause of obscurity,—it is at once *compressed* and *figurative*. Some have cut the knot by maintaining that the text in this place is corrupt, and this view is rendered not improbable by the variations of the LXX.: "If thou hast brought it

rightly, but not rightly divided it, hast thou not sinned? Be still, to thee shall be his recourse, and thou shalt rule over him." We ought not, however, to give up the problem in this way, so long as there is a sense which the Hebrew will bear, and which is not only reconcilable with the context, but throws light upon it. C. H. H. Wright's (*Genesis, in loc.*) rendering is, except in the turn given to one word, similar to that of the Revised Version: "If thou doest well, is there not lifting up (*i.e.* of countenance)? but if thou doest not well, sin is at the door, a crouching (lion); towards thee is his desire (he is lying in wait for thee), but thou shouldest rule over him (*i.e.* thou oughtest to withstand him)." Thus understood, vers. 6, 7 point the moral of the whole narrative. To Cain, dissatisfied and wrathful, that which is at once remonstrance and warning is addressed: "What right hast thou to resent the righteous judgment of the Lord? Darest thou charge him with unrighteousness when thou reapest but as thou hast sown? His doings are not arbitrary and capricious; there is a reason for them which thou mayest discover if thou seek aright. But beware how thou dost cherish a discontented and resentful disposition, lest it lead thee into further sin, which as yet thou dost not see or suspect, but which, as a beast of prey watches for his victim, is waiting to destroy thee. But even yet thy fate is