

reason why Christian ministers fail in many cases to attract the cultivated fact that their thoughts move in the circle of faith, and they speak to those in this circle, and are, therefore, not understood by those outside of it. On the form and composition of the sermon the power of custom has a deleterious influence. For centuries faith brought into this form has borne blessed fruit; but that was a time in which faith was still the substance of the people's life. This time is past, almost entirely past, for the higher and highest classes of society." He, of course, speaks of his own surroundings, and the general prevalence of rationalism. While remaining firm in the faith himself, the preacher is to approach the wanderer and lead him back into the stronghold of faith. Sermons are required which are adapted to those alienated from the Bible, sermons which give evidence "that Christianity is something more than a beautiful poem of antiquity, that it is a reality enduring throughout all ages."

## LITERATURE.

Among the more important recent theological works is the Compend on the Introduction to the New Testament (*Lehrbuch der Einleitung in das Neue Testament*), by Prof. Dr. B. Weiss, of Berlin. The volume of 650 pages aims less to give new thoughts than a systematic arrangement and development of the views of the author already expressed on other occasions. The new matter respecting separate books pertains chiefly to the Epistles to the Corinthians, those of John, and the Acts of the Apostles. While the work reflects the well-known views of the learned author, he stands too much in the development and conflicts of New Testament exegesis to give a mere reproduction of previously expressed thoughts. His foundation, he says, remains the same; but, having learned both from friend and foe, he has carried the superstructure further than heretofore. His chief aim is neither criticism nor apologetics, "but a real introduction into the living, historical knowledge of Scripture." This he declares to have been the purpose of all his past writings, since on it depends the future of theology and the Church. This knowledge is endangered both by a dogmatic tendency which makes the Scriptures minister to subjective combinations of views, and by that critical spirit which ignores the peculiar religious element in the Bible. He therefore attended more than is usually the case "to the analysis of the course of thought in the separate books, to the determination of their religious and literary peculiarity, to their composition, their historic presuppositions and their aims." Holtzmann declares that, from the first, Christianity was a "book-religion." Respecting this view, Weiss writes: "I can only say, God be thanked that this was not the case. . . . From the beginning Christianity, was life; and since this life pulsates in its original sources, these themselves cannot be interpreted and

understood from 'literary dependencies.' This life, whose fuller and deeper appreciation must ever be the aim of all theological science, I do not claim to have inclosed wholly within the frame of my introduction, nor to have completely represented it; but I have honestly striven to do so." In this apprehension of Christianity as originally a life, not as merely a literature, he sees the main distinction between himself and the promoters of certain critical tendencies. While the work is critical and apologetical only, for the sake of leading "into the rich treasury of our New Testament books," he says: "I know that no scientific work can reveal the deepest mystery of this treasury and explain its contents. But I also know without it the theologian is not thoroughly prepared for the preaching of the Word and for the conflict of the present, imposed on all of us."

The same author has just published a new edition (the seventh) of Meyer's Commentary on John. Special attention has been paid to the works of Keil and Schanz, the former a representative of strict Protestant orthodoxy, the latter a Catholic. Prof. Weiss is convinced that Meyer's Commentary should be more thoroughly worked over and reconstructed than a feeling of piety for the author has hitherto permitted. Meyer's excellent idea "of giving an almost complete view of the exegetical labors respecting each book of the New Testament" cannot be carried out in the future without making the Commentary more extensive than was originally intended and without increasing the difficulty of the exegetical study. "Even of the philological, lexical and archeological references of the author, as well as of his dogmatical and critical developments, much is antiquated." Weiss thinks it would be well for exegetes to indicate their views as to the manner of so changing the series of Commentaries as best to accomplish their purpose: "The problem is too difficult for one alone to take the solution upon himself."

The epoch-making work of Prof. Dr. A. Harnack, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, first volume, is subjected to a searching criticism by Prof. Dr. Lasson, Berlin, in "Preussische Jahrbücher," for October. Prof. Lasson holds, that the fact that the Christian doctrines were brought into contact with Greek philosophy, and thus developed into dogmas, is no evidence of a corruption of those doctrines. Original Christianity was rich in germs which were to be unfolded in future ages. Their development, therefore, was not a destruction or corruption of the original elements, but a perfectly legitimate expansion. He opposes the view of Harnack that Christianity was originally "Christianized Judaism," or merely a spiritualization of the religion of Israel. He holds that the author ignores the peculiar Christian elements in the New Testament, and depreciates the importance and influence of Paul in the early Church. Harnack's position,