

not the Word of God, but only contains it, the difficulty of determining with any degree of accuracy what is and what is not the Word of God would render nugatory the great purpose for which the Bible was given, namely, to be the rule of faith and practice, the unerring guide in the highest interests of human life. It would only give added force to another tendency that comes from another quarter, and is far from being destitute of influence, by removing the Bible from the sphere of practice and relegating it to the realm of speculation, or supplying a reason for neglecting it altogether. The distinction is a subtle one and too fine-spun for everyday use.

Dr. Vincent lays much stress on the progressive character of Exegesis. He says that

the legitimate facts of theology are external. Its deductions and classifications are not. It is based upon a progressive revelation, and is therefore a progressive science. Its deductions and classifications are affected by limitations of Scriptural knowledge, by false principles of interpretation, and by faulty exegesis. New light is ever breaking from Scripture. Hence the results of progressive exegesis must from time to time modify or correct such theological statements as are not identified with the eternal, fundamental truth of Scripture.

Elsewhere the learned lecturer formally illustrates the progressive character of Exegesis, and states that "every new revelation of science, history, or art will present itself to be co-ordinated with the utterances of the Bible." That revelation was progressive is a self-evident truism. As the Revised Version puts it, "God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things." But is not the canon of sacred Scripture complete? Outside of Mormonism is there any claim to special divine revelation since the Apocalypse was given to John in Patmos? Exegesis and theology may be progressive in the sense that ever-widening knowledge enables man to obtain a clearer understanding of the meaning of sacred Scripture, but that is the only sense in which it can be true. There is not a little plausibility in the talk about progressive theology, but as so much of it is entirely dependent on conjecture, supposition and individual bias, those of conservative leanings may be pardoned if they hesitate to follow some of the new guides that indicate a fondness for new and doubtful paths. It will continue true when the Higher Criticism has said its last word that the Christian whose learning may be of the widest will unite with the humblest believer in declaring, "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path."

Dr. Vincent treats his subject with great ability and conciseness. The points he makes are that Exegesis is necessary, critical, under which head he notices the distinction between the divine and human in revelation, and fully recognizes the influence of the Holy Spirit in the illumination of the mind that believingly and devoutly studies the Sacred Word. His next points are that exegesis is progressive; that it must be modest and patient; and finally that it must be courageous. The transition from this latter point to a defence of the position Union Seminary has assumed is easy and natural. The spirit displayed throughout the lecture is admirable, and will no doubt tend in a measure to dispel some of the distrust with which that institution is in many quarters regarded.

MINISTERIAL EXPERIMENTS.

HOWEVER well equipped our theological institutions may be there are some things the young minister has to learn in the school of practical experience. The college life has its advantages as well as its pleasures. In itself with all its opportunities it has much to do with the moulding of the ministry, with its failure or its success. The mental training is of the greatest value. The stimulus to studious habits is readily recognized and the associations of academic life are cultivating and refining in their influence. A young man, however, does not acquire a large experience of actual life within the walls of college. He must live with men engaged in the real and stern work of life. The theory of ministerial work may be complete, but the carrying out of it is a matter of confessed difficulty. How few adequately realize the beautiful ideal of ministerial life and work of which they dreamed in the peaceful days of preparatory study. Occasional opportunities of preaching and more steady mission work are excellent means of training for the future pastorate. Not a few of our students have to endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ in difficult mission fields, but the steady, constant strain of pastoral labour is not felt as it will be afterward. There is a universal sympathy for the ardent and ingenu-

ous youth who devotes his life to the ministry of the Gospel. In most places there is a cordial welcome for him, and if he does not receive all the encouragement he needs it is because the average purpose among his people but ill accords with his own. When he is full-fledged, the novelty is gone, and he is regarded with a cooler and more critical spirit. He has to ascertain his environment and in a measure accommodate himself to the sphere to which he has been called.

When a young minister comes face to face with the difficulties of his field of labour, his aim is to surmount them and work as effectively as he can. He longs and labours and prays that he may be made an able minister of the New Testament.

The best of men will come far short of their ideal, but no minister of the Gospel worthy of the name will permit himself to sink into a condition where a mere round of listless routine will be tolerable to him. He will think out plans and try experiments till he succeeds in bringing himself into full sympathy with his work and with the people to whom he ministers. A young minister out west has been giving in the current number of the *Andover Review* an account of the methods he has devised for making his ministry interesting and profitable. It has to be borne in mind that no man can lay down a cast-iron plan either for himself or others. The suppression of individuality, especially in a minister of the Gospel, is a great mistake, and a slavish imitation of others would be a greater mistake still. A copy is rarely as good as an original picture; at all events the market price of an original is much higher than the copyist can obtain for his work. The plans of others, however, may be suggestive, and may put one in the way of doing his best.

The young western minister sketched a system for one year's work. He made up his mind to give one month to each department. His sketch included the church membership, the Sunday school, the week-day service, the young people's society, the sermon, visitation, the minister's literary specialty, the minister's art specialty, and the recreation period. This he illustrates in detail, and to make his plan more intelligible, we give in his own words what he says about the Sabbath school, and the week-day service:—

The Sunday school was studied with the superintendent. The names of the pupils, with their classes, committed to memory. Discussions held with teachers as to methods of class instruction. Blackboard exercises introduced into the opening services of the school. And the entire school began the morning preaching service on Sunday in a series of short illustrated sermons on the attributes of Christ. Again take for example the month given to the week-day service. Letters were written to every member of the Church asking his attendance. Lists of subjects for the meetings were carefully studied. As many men as possible given something to do; not asked to do it, but assigned it, as if it was expected they would do it as a matter of course, because they were Church members. Special singing for the services was arranged; and special preparation given to each meeting, even to its minutest details of opening and closing. These two brief illustrations will indicate something of the way in which each group was treated.

Such a plan has manifest advantages, and likewise some disadvantages, and these the writer of the paper balances the one against the other with satisfaction because the disadvantages are outweighed by the benefits he derived by following out his design. He recommends the habit that several ministers follow, that of laying out a plan for a series of sermons on particular subjects, a plan that has much to commend its adoption. The plan need not be pursued with unbroken regularity, nor need it be announced, but it can be carried out according to circumstances. From the special study it entails, a well-defined plan will be helpful to the minister and profitable to the hearer. The writer gives as an outline of a series he prepared on "Christ the Reformer." In carrying it out he adopted a method that had among other things the merit of novelty at least to commend it. He enlisted the interest of individual members in his subject by assigning to them the task of obtaining information on special points bearing on the theme of discourse. In like manner he employed the members of the Christian Endeavour Society in looking up texts in which Christ was spoken of as the Saviour. All this shows that this particular minister was deeply interested in his work and was casting about him for the most likely means to interest others in it also. Whether other labourers in the vineyard could carry out these or similar methods depends on circumstances. At all events they are suggestive. Few things hamper a ministry more than settling down into a formal and perfunctory discharge of ministerial duties. Pulpit lamps, if they are to be kept brightly burning, need to be regularly and carefully trimmed and supplied with fresh oil. It is beaten oil that is required for sanctuary lights.

Books and Magazines.

A NEW strictly literary monthly, to be called *The Bookman*, will be launched in London next month. The founder and editor is Dr. Robertson Nicoll.

DR. WILKIE MITCHELL, of Philadelphia, has put into narrative form the ripest result of a lifetime of specially trained observation of human nature. He calls his story "Characteristics," and the *Century* has secured it for the coming year. The editors consider it "more than a novel," made up as it is of part science, part poetry, and part the author's self.

A TRIBUTE to the Memory of Alexander Milne, by the Rev. R. P. H. Vail, D.D., delivered in the First Presbyterian Church, Stamford, Conn., sets forth the excellencies of character manifested by a worthy and somewhat prominent elder in the American Church. Mr. Milne was a native of Scotland, an energetic and successful business man, and one who was ready to embrace every opportunity of doing good. Dr. Vail's tribute is neat, tasteful and appreciative.

THE NARRATIVE of the Tenth International Christian Endeavour Convention, held at Minneapolis last July, gives an admirable view of the proceedings of that most interesting and instructive gathering. The principal addresses are fully outlined and a complete synopsis of the doings of the Convention is presented. The "Narrative" is neatly printed and is easy of reference. It is embellished with illustrations and numerous portraits, some of the latter, however, are not specially fitted to draw forth the enthusiastic admiration of the cultured art critic.

BITS FROM BLINKHONNY: or, The Bell o' the Manse. A Tale of Scottish Village Life between 1841 and 1851. By John Strathesk. New and revised edition. (Edinburgh and London: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier.)—"Bits from Blinkhony" first made John Strathesk famous. It is a book that deserves to keep its place well to the front of Scottish stories of recent times. Its delineations of character are graphic and true, and it is enlivened with strokes of humour redolent of the land of the heather. The author has profited by experience and possibly by hints of the critical fraternity, and has made this new edition most acceptable in every respect. It is issued in the publishers' shilling series.

KNOX COLLEGE MONTHLY. (Toronto: D. T. McAlinsh.)—The September issue of this excellent monthly is a strong one. It opens with a thoughtful and practical paper on "The Claims and Expectations of the Church," by Dr. Thompson, of Sarnia. The summer session question is further and ably discussed by Prof. Scrimger and Principal Grant, and Rev. C. B. Ross, B.D., of Lachine, has an able but brief paper on "Recent Controversies on Religious Questions." The versatile and accomplished editor, Rev. J. A. Macdonald, contributes a sympathetic and appreciative paper on "John McNeill." Professor McLaren gives a full and most interesting account of Central India Mission, and in addition there are the customary features that are eagerly looked for and greatly relished in each succeeding number of the *Monthly*.

TIBBY'S TRYST: or, I will lift mine eyes unto the Hills. By Robina F. Hardy. (Edinburgh and London: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier.)—A peculiar interest attaches to this work. It is the last that will come from the pen of the gifted authoress. Miss Hardy was an earnest and self-denying worker in the cause of the Gospel and of humanity. She was called from the scene of her earthly labours about the time this work was published. Her own personality, the melancholy interest attaching to it, and the intrinsic excellence and ability of the work itself unite in directing attention to a book which will be cherished as an enduring memorial of one who was held in high esteem for her works' sake. Another fact is that the late Mr. Wylie, the accomplished editor of the *Christian Leader*, published in Glasgow, ended his work by writing a brief commendatory notice of the book when it appeared. Apart from all incidental circumstances however interesting, "Tibby's Tryst" has enduring merits of its own.

MR. GLADSTONE: A Popular Biography. By E. A. Macdonald, author of the "Story of Stanley." (Edinburgh and London: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier.)—The design of this issue in the publishers' shilling series will best be gathered from the introductory sentences of the author's preface. He says: "This book is written, not for the critics to slash at, but for the people to read. It makes no pretensions to be a fresh contribution to what is already known about the great Liberal leader, nor does it profess to be a complete history of his times. So far as we are aware, no other record of his life, on really popular lines and at a popular price, has yet appeared; and this biography is intended to meet a felt want." It may be stated that the author has been remarkably successful in the treatment of his intensely interesting subject on the lines thus laid down. Apart from his political views there are few personalities so remarkable at the present time as William Ewart Gladstone, and in this little work the story is well, directly and interestingly told.

YOUR HERITAGE: or, New England Threatened. By Rev. Calvin E. Ameron, A.M., President of the French Protestant College, Springfield, Mass. (Springfield: French Protestant College.)—This neat little volume grew out of a course of four lectures, prepared at the request of the French Protestant College Students' Missionary Society, and delivered in several Churches in New England. President Ameron is well known to Canadians, especially to those of Quebec, for his many excellent qualities and accomplishments and for the good work he has been enabled to do for the advancement of evangelical Christianity, both in Canada and in his present important sphere of labour. The facts and reasonings presented in these lectures ought to be widely known and pondered. Some of them are startling and are placed before the reader with plainness. We hear much of the Canadian exodus in these days, but how few of us adequately realize that to day there are 1,000,000 French Canadians in the United States, half of that number being found in Massachusetts alone. Mr. Ameron discusses the probable influence on the future of the country of this great influx of a race that is so largely under the power of the Roman Catholic Church. He speaks hopefully of the good being done by Protestant missionary effort among his fellow countrymen, a work to which he himself brings a rare devotion.