

may enjoy hearing a sermon in which self-denial is earnestly commended; we delight to see that rare but beautiful virtue depicted in some ideal hero or heroine in a novel or poem, but we fail to practise it. Has the essentially Christian virtue of self-denial a higher place assigned to it in the realm of art than it has in our individual or home-life?

No wonder then that when a preacher takes up the subject of popular amusements for the purpose of affording guidance to his people, an animated discussion is sure to follow. It has to be borne in mind that amusement and recreation are indispensably requisite for human happiness and well-being. It effects no good purpose for old people who have borne the heat and burden of life's day to frown upon the enjoyments of the young. They must remember that they have been young themselves. Nor on the other hand is it wise for young people to summarily dismiss from their minds the counsels tendered them by their elders on the subject of amusement. If there may sometimes be a disposition on the part of elderly people to over-interference with the pursuits of the young, there is certainly a disposition to resent with impatience and in some cases with an appearance of contempt the advice that experience is able to tender.

The modern evangelical pastor may not aspire to be a father confessor to his young people, even if he should desire, but he can help them very much, not by proscribing this and that form of recreation, but by presenting clearly the great purposes of life, and its responsibilities, the need of watchfulness over self and cultivation of a Christ-like spirit and conformity to His will. How incompatible with this are many forms of amusement which people look upon with a lenient eye. That there is need for earnest warning in these days few can doubt. If the lithographs that stare on people from dead walls and from shop windows in the crowded thoroughfares of towns and cities at all resemble the scanty costumes in which actors and actresses are arrayed on the stage, it is surely high time that the friends and well-wishers of youth, those who seek the well-being and safety of society, should lift their voices in emphatic protest against the demoralizing tendencies of such scenic representations. People may honestly differ as to the place and value of dramatic and lyric art, but when the stage gives itself up to the representation of frivolity and vice, and finds that to be its best paying department it is a sign that moral earnestness is beginning to lose its hold upon the communities where such representations are welcomed and encouraged.

### THE HIGHER CRITICISM ON TRIAL.

TWO important ecclesiastical trials in the Presbyterian Church in the United States are in progress. Necessarily they are attracting a large measure of attention. They are followed with a deep and abiding interest by many because of the consequences that may follow. So serious in the estimation of many are the possible results, that whatever may be the decisions reached, there may be secessions from a Church that only a few years ago reunited, and which cherished expectations of a still greater union with the brethren in the Southern Church. Whether a disruption of the Church is among the probabilities, it would be premature to predict. Whenever a crisis is impending it is no unusual thing for participants in debate to conjure up a possible secession, if the views they take are not adopted. They may feel that way and believe in the possibility of what they predict, but in most cases their fears have failed of realization. For momentary and rhetorical purposes a prophecy of secession may not be without its effect, still it is a line of argument that with all serious minded and thoughtful persons should be indulged in sparingly. All whose duty it is to take a leading part in the discussion of doctrinal questions, having an immediate personal bearing, ought to realize fully the responsibility resting upon them, and be guided only by the most conscientious motives. The paramount interest should be the maintenance of truth. The moment that expediency and respect of persons obtrude themselves the true judicial balance of mind is impaired, and the interests of impartial truth and justice are more or less jeopardized.

More recent trials of alleged heresy show a nearer approximation to the proper frame of mind in which they should be dealt with. Questions of this character necessarily receive a degree of public attention. People generally become interested; they form opinions, and not infrequently those least

informed express their judgments with a positiveness that better-informed persons would never think of expressing. Warm feeling for and against persons suspected and accused of holding unsound doctrinal views is sure to arise, and even presbyters, being but human, are susceptible of being influenced by the sentiments they hear so frequently expressed. The only safe as well as right attitude for them to take in all such cases is to trust in God and do the right.

The two trials on which attention is at present concentrated are those of Professor Charles A. Briggs, of Union Theological Seminary, New York, and Professor H. P. Smith, of Lane Seminary, Cincinnati. So far as they have yet advanced, these trials have been conducted in a proper and becoming spirit. Both prosecution and defence are eager to secure decisions in their favour, but up to the present time nothing unseemly has occurred, and a spirit of candour and fairness has been apparent. In both cases substantially the same questions are at stake. The aggressive attitude of the Higher Criticism has challenged the attention of orthodoxy and has led in both cases to the serious charge of teaching contrary to the doctrine of Scripture and the Standards of the Church. Much time has already been taken up both in the Presbyteries of New York and Cincinnati in disposing of preliminary and technical matters, and the real merits of the respective cases have not yet been reached. The accused professors state that they are anxious for speedy trial, yet they are fighting every inch of ground; they dispute every approach leading to the merits of the case. The amended charges in the case of Dr. Briggs have been attacked by him with a subtle ingenuity that the proverbial Philadelphia lawyer might envy. When the vital parts of the case are reached a forensic display of unusual ability may be expected. Before that stage is reached in the Briggs case considerable time may elapse, since he has appealed to the Synod of New York against several rulings of the Presbytery. While it is far from desirable that questions of such magnitude as are involved in this trial should be decided in a summary fashion, it is equally undesirable that they should be extended over a number of years before a final decision is reached. For the good of all concerned, for the good of the Church and in the interest of vital religion these cases should, with due care and deliberation, be finally terminated with the least possible delay.

From present appearances in the case of Professor Smith it is likely that a conclusion will be reached more speedily. The charges as formulated against him are as follows:

I. The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America charges the Rev. Henry Preserved Smith, D.D., a minister in said Church, and a member of the Presbytery of Cincinnati, with teaching (in two articles in the *New York Evangelist*, dated respectively March 10, 1892, and April 7, 1892), contrary to the regulations and practice of the Church founded on the Holy Scriptures, and set forth in the constitution of said Church, that a minister in said Church may abandon the essential features of the system of doctrine held by said Church, and which he received and adopted at his ordination, and rightfully retain his position as a minister in said Church.

The second charge Professor Smith is called upon to answer accuses him

With teaching in a pamphlet entitled "Biblical Scholarship and Inspiration" contrary to a fundamental doctrine of the Word of God and the Confession of Faith, that the Holy Spirit did not control the inspired writers in their composition of the Holy Scriptures as to make their utterances absolutely truthful, i.e., free from error when interpreted in their natural and intended sense.

Based on this same pamphlet the third charge brought against Dr. Smith is thus framed:—

While alleging that the Holy Scriptures are inspired, and an infallible rule of faith and practice, with denying in fact their inspiration in the sense in which inspiration is attributed to the Holy Scriptures by the Holy Scriptures themselves, and by the confession of Faith.

To these charges Dr. Smith made specific objections and in the first the Presbytery refused to sustain his objections by a vote of forty-three to nineteen. The point was taken that on these objections to form neither Dr. Smith nor the members of the prosecuting committee should vote, so that when the specifications of the first charge came to be voted on the numbers were reduced, standing for the first specification twenty-five to sustain Dr. Smith's objections and thirty-seven against. On the motion to sustain the objections to the second specification twenty-three voted for, and thirty-five against. So great was the interest taken in the disposing of preliminaries it may be taken for granted that when the merits of the case are reached the interest will be deeper still, considering the momentous nature of the issues in suspense.

## Books and Magazines.

ST. NICHOLAS. (New York: The Century Co.)—The December number of this favourite magazine for young people is bright and joyous, as is fitting for the holiday season.

OUR LITTLE ONES AND THE NURSERY. (Boston: The Russell Publishing Co.)—For attractiveness and adaptation to its readers this admirable monthly is unsurpassed. The matter and illustrations are all that could be desired.

HARPER'S YOUNG PEOPLE. (New York: Harper & Brothers.)—This weekly magazine more than sustains the high reputation it has long maintained. The varied instructive and entertaining communications that appear in its pages, together with many excellent illustrations make it a welcome visitor in multitudes of homes.

THE *Illustrated News of the World*, in addition to the regular contributions of eminent literateurs, gives finely-engraved pictures of current events, and portraits of the celebrities who are prominent in connection with them. A serial by a popular novelist is also a constant feature of this, the pioneer of illustrated journalism.

LITTELL'S LIVING AGE. (Boston: Littell & Co.)—For nearly half a century the *Living Age* has held a place in the front rank of American periodicals—coming week by week freighted with the most valuable literary products of foreign lands. It selects with rare judgment and discrimination the most masterly productions, scientific, biographical, historical, political; the best essays, reviews, criticisms, tales, poetry, in fact everything the intelligent reader most desires to obtain. To all who desire to keep abreast of the time this valuable weekly is indispensable.

THE METHODIST MAGAZINE. (Toronto: William Briggs.)—The accomplished editor continues his description of "The City of the Sultan," a finely illustrated paper. It is followed by an equally well illustrated paper on "Paris the Beautiful" by Christopher Cross. Other papers that will prove attractive to readers are: "Alfred Tennyson" by Miss Mary S. Daniels, B.A.; "The Mutineers of the *Bounty*," "The First Hundred Years of Missions," by Rev. J. S. Ross, M.A.; and the "Less Known Poems of Tennyson," by the Editor. Others things of value and interest will be found in the number.

FROM MR. N. T. WILSON, Toronto, representing the Presbyterian Board of Publication, Philadelphia, a neat and attractive little paper-covered pamphlet on "Our Heavenly Rest," by Margaret Stewart Hermal. It contains brief meditations on different aspects of the subject for every day in the week; also the well-known and much appreciated annual "The Westminster Question Book" for 1893; "First Steps for the Little Ones, or Primary Class Lessons," arranged by Mr. Israel P. Black; "Our Scholars for Christ," by the Rev. R. Ballantyne, M.A., an appeal to Sabbath School Teachers, Christian parents and workers among the young; and a neat form of certificate for use in the primary department.

HARPER'S MAGAZINE. (New York: Harper & Brothers.)—The number for this month is nearly all given up to Christmas literature and pictorial illustration. The frontispiece is an illustration suggested by H. C. Bunner's contribution, "A Crazy Wife's Ship." Papers that will find favour in the eyes of the general reader are: "A New Light on the Chinese," by Henry Burden McDowall; "Some Types of the Virgin," by Theodore Child; and "Lord Bateman, a Ballad, with five illustrations from drawings (hitherto unpublished) by William Makepeace Thackeray. Comment by Anne Thackeray Ritchie." The rest of the contents is made up of brilliant short stories and poems adapted to the Christmas season, and the usual departments that interest readers so much.

THE CENTURY. (New York: The Century Co.) The handsome cover of the December number is in itself an announcement that it has been designed for the holiday issue. The illustrations are suggestive of the season, some of them in its more sacred aspect, the frontispiece being a fine engraving of a Madonna and Child by Dagnan-Bouveret. "Picturesque New York," is a finely illustrated paper by Mrs. Schuyler van Rensselaer. The more solid contributions to the number are "Benefits Forgotten," by Wolcott Balestier; "Leaves from the Autobiography," by Tommaso Salvini; "Impressions of Browning and His Art," by Stopford A. Brooke; "The Problem of Poverty," in the present day series, by Washington Gladden; "To Gipsyland," by Elizabeth Robins Pennell; "The Effect of Scientific Study on Religious Belief," by H. S. Williams; "The Gipsy Trail," by Rudyard Kipling; and "War Correspondence as a Fine Art," by Archibald Forbes. In addition to the regular serial there is an unusual number of excellent short stories by the most distinguished writers of the time. The poetical contributions, too, are numerous and most of them breathe the spirit of the season.

THE HOMILETIC REVIEW. (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Co.; Toronto: 11 Richmond Street West.)—The December number brings to its close the twenty-fourth volume of the *Homiletic Review*. The review section contains valuable articles from well-known pens. William W. McLane, D.D., closes his short series of papers on the subject "An Historical Study of Hell." Bishop Warren has a timely discussion of the theme, "How Far Should Appeals to Fear of Future Retribution Enter into Preaching?" Professor Hunt, of Princeton, contributes an interesting though brief study on "The Ethical and the Etymological." "The Story of the Leyden Pastor," John Robinson, is told eloquently by William Elliot Griffis, D.D., The Rev. James M. Campbell has an admirable article on "Spirituality an Element in true Exegesis." Drs. Joseph T. Wright, Heinrich Buttner, Alexander MacLaren, James Carmichael, A. J. Lyman and others give an unusual value to the Sermonic Section by their contributions. Professor Cooper, of New Brunswick, writes forcibly in the Sociological Section of "The Relations of Anarchy to Civil Liberty." The Miscellaneous Section contains a very readable paper by Dr. D. S. Schaff on "Books and their Makers." In the department of "Living Issues" Rev. H. H. Emmett presents sympathetically "The Indian Question" from an Indian's standpoint. The Prospectus for the coming year gives promise that the *Review* will maintain the high standard attained in the past. It should be in the hands of all our clergy. No publication can compete with it in its helpfulness along the line of preparation for the pulpit.