

BOOKS AND MAGAZINES.

ST. ULRICH; OR, RESTING IN THE KING'S WORD. By E. A. W. (Philadelphia: The American Sunday School Union.)—The scene of this interesting and well-written story is laid in the Tyrol. It contains some good description of Tyrolean Scenery, and the habits prevalent among the people. It also contains several good illustrations. The blessedness of trusting in the Divine promises amid trials and wrong is impressively taught.

GWENDOLINE. By Agnes Giberne. (Philadelphia: The American Sunday School Union.)—The Halcots and Halcomes, the Selwyns and Fosbrooks who figure prominently in this story are English people. The scene of it is in England. The delineation of life and character is clear and distinct. As the narrative advances it grows in interest. It is true to nature. The lesson inculcated—the value of genuine religion and the real comfort and guidance it brings—is not obtrusively, but none the less effectively taught in the story of Gwendoline.

ABIDE IN CHRIST. Thoughts on the Blessed Life of Fellowship with the Son of God. By A. M. (New York: Anson D. F. Randolph & Co.)—This is a book written as an aid to a devout life. The title contains the main theme. A suitable text is selected for each day of one month, and a meditation follows. These meditations are not merely pious rhapsodies, they are the direct and simple utterances of a fervent and Christ-like spirit. They also contain profitable and practical exhortations, which, if followed, would greatly strengthen joyous Christian living.

BIBLICAL EXPOSITOR AND PEOPLES' COMMENTARY. By Jacob M. Hirschfelder. (Toronto: Rowell & Hutchison.)—Professor Hirschfelder has undertaken a work which deserves to meet with great encouragement. It is one for which he is eminently fitted. His ripe, varied, and extensive scholarship enables him to speak with becoming confidence on the subjects discussed in the earlier numbers of this work. At the same time there are no traces of dogmatism in the treatment of his subject. The numbers to hand are devoted to a thorough and exhaustive examination of the genuineness and authenticity of Old Testament Scripture. The extent and thoroughness of the author's linguistic acquirements, his wide acquaintance with the results of recent Biblical criticism are apparent. His reasoning in defence of the genuineness of the sacred oracles is conclusive. "The Bible Expositor" will add new interest to the study of the sacred scriptures. It is published in a manner to bring it within the reach of all.

ALDERSYDE. A Border Story of Seventy Years Ago. By Annie S. Swan. (Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson and Ferrier.)—Amid so much that is pitiless and flabby in the shape of stories for young people, it is refreshing to come across a really good book that, in addition to a well written narrative, carries without obtrusion its moral with it. "Aldersyde" is in every respect worthy of commendation. The persons of the story are real, not shadowy ghosts. They stand out clearly in their own individuality before the reader's imagination. This interesting story in which the manners and customs of a past generation are portrayed is told with a charming simplicity and beauty that create a most favourable impression on the mind of the reader. The tone of the book is thoroughly healthy and elevating. The work has been already received most favourably. The Prime Minister of Great Britain read it with delight, and addressed to its author a note in which he speaks most appreciatively and kindly of her effort. The book is beautifully got up and embellished with six fine lithograph illustrations from original sketches of famous scenes in the south of Scotland.

JOCK HALLIDAY. A Grassmarket Hero. By Robina F. Hardy. (Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier.)—The true artist that would succeed in delineating life and character must have an open eye for the beautiful wherever it is to be found. Another qualification equally essential is an affectionate interest in the subject of study. One possessing these gifts has no limited range of observation. Loveliness of character is not the peculiar possession of the great and the high born. In the humblest walks of life is to be found many a gem of purest ray serene. The writer of Jock Halliday has the natural endowments necessary to a charming story-teller. A well cultivated

mind, and previous successful experiments in authorship have enabled her to produce a most readable, interesting and instructive story of humble life, whose unpromising beginnings lead under happy influences to the most gratifying results. In the narrative of Jock Halliday's misfortunes, struggles and successes there is nothing unreal or exaggerated. It is a faithful transcript of every-day life. Such a life as is not only possible but actual even amid sordid surroundings. No one can read this well-told tale without being delighted and benefited by it.

LARRY GILBERT. By Mrs. S. K. Reeves. (Philadelphia: The American Sunday School Union.)—This book is written for the young. It records the leading events in the life of the hero, Larry Gilbert. He was an orphan who lived with his pious grandmother on a slope of the Blue Mountain. He was a good boy and made friends. His teacher took a kindly interest in him. When his grandmother died he continued for a while working with farmers in the neighbourhood of his old home. After a time he went to a situation in a merchantile house in town. Larry began on the lowest step in the ladder. He soon gained the confidence of the principal and the best people in the establishment; but he incurred the envy of a scape-grace clerk who treacherously made it appear that Larry was a dishonest lad. Appearances were against him. He was imprisoned. He had to associate with hardened criminals. Two of them he was the means of rescuing from crime. His old teacher, now a minister, found him in prison. Through his efforts the real culprit is discovered and Larry is released. From that time forward he is respected. His prosperity enables him to do a great deal of good for the benefit of others. The book is well written and attractively illustrated.

THE HOME MISSION PROBLEM.

MR. EDITOR,—May I be permitted, although at the eleventh hour, to say a few words in regard to this problem? I think it can all be reduced to this principle, viz., *personal acquaintance*. That was the chief ground on which the disciples proceeded to elect a successor to Judas (Acts i. 21-26). That was the guiding principle in the election of deacons according to Acts vi. There we read of them choosing seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and of wisdom—languages which implies that the electors and appointees were well known to each other. The same principle is recognized in the advice that Paul gives to Timothy and Titus regarding the election of office bearers. As a bishop must rule his house well, then, assuming that he is married, how can it be known that he does so unless he lives for some time amongst those having the right of choosing him to office? But it may be said with regret, that we never take such a thing into consideration, if he can preach a well composed sermon.

"Moreover," says Paul, "he must have a good report of them that are without," and when, it may be asked, do we ever take that into consideration? What is the apostles meaning here? Partly this, that the candidate must live honestly among the neighbours; and if we attached more importance to honest living, we would hear less of ministers cheating others in horse trading, running up bill they could not pay, getting drunk and the like. Even outsiders then are somewhat interested in a man's election to office; and their collective opinion ought to influence those whose business it is to fill the vacancy with a suitable servant.

Now the question arises: "How are the members of a congregation to know a man sufficiently to be justified in accepting or rejecting him as the case might happen?" to which I would reply: "Place him in the vacant church for at least three months." You would thereby give him time to visit the people, especially the sick; ways would be better noticed than if he were a mere passing stranger, he would have some time to influence the young, and perhaps to start a Sabbath school, if there were none in the congregation; and he could also get up a few fresh sermon, which might be of use to him elsewhere, if his election in his present place of probation were an impossibility.

Outsiders would know him; and in the event of his election, it would give all a better reason for sitting still, when asked to come forward with objections, if they had any, against his induction—they would not be giving him the mere benefit of the doubt.

Such a trial of three months would be favourable to

his pocket. He would not be paying railway fares every little while, perhaps every week, especially when certain Presbyteries might prohibit him coming within their bounds. While probationers may have their faults, yet many a minister who prevents a probationer from coming into his Presbytery must incur a fearful responsibility in the face of the text: "He that despiseth you despiseth Me, and he that despiseth Me despiseth Him that sent Me" (Luke x. 16); and again, "It were better for him (the offender) that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea than that he should offend one of these little ones." (Luke xviii. 2.) Constant movement is a strong temptation to make a probationer take undue steps to obtain a settlement in any congregation.

But again, such a trial of three months would be favourable to the congregation, although the probationer did not give satisfaction. It would be far easier for the congregation to pay the wages of a period than the wages of a week. Look to the efforts, I might say the unsanctified efforts, that certain congregations are obliged to put forth from time to time, to make up the probationer's weekly allowance; and as not a few congregations are poor to pay the little stipend regularly when due, they often run up a bill with a long list of probationers, some of the latter remaining a year or more without their pay, or waiting till the Greek kalends for it—a state of things which engenders a bad conscience in congregations, preventing their growth in holiness, and making them liable to the prophetic denunciation: "Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully." (Jer. xlvi. 10.)

Supposing then that the vacant congregation were poor, it would be able to give something however small to the servant removing; but there would be fewer removals than at present, for the people would not have their minds upset by a variety of preachers in every variety of style, until all would be obliged to yield to the maxim that comparisons are odious.

If objections should be urged against my plan, I would ask my opponent, "Have you faith in the Word of God?" If so can you not find therein the principle of personal acquaintance in solution at least with regard to the filling up of vacancies; and if it should work ill, would it be worse than our present method, which is at once too quick and too slow? Are not congregations to slow when they give a hearing to a long list of men, and too quick when they give one of them their choice? for they have him in the pulpit before they are properly acquainted with him, and ere long they may compel him to shake the dust off his feet, as an unhappy termination to his thankless ministry. "LECTOR."

MORE QUERIES.

MR. EDITOR,—Was there ever any instance of God's Spirit being poured out upon a people after building a grand church?

Whether do we find the people in great grand churches more humble than those who worship at an altar of unbewn stone, or the reverse?

Did even Solomon's temple humble the Jews, or did it produce the reverse?

Have the poor ever gone to grand churches to hear the Gospel? Will they ever go? Will they ever eat the crumbs from the rich man's table?

Why is it that you can gather the poor and the religious outcasts anywhere to hear the Word of God, save in churches?

Was Solomon's temple a blessing or a curse to the Israelites; given to them like Saul to be a king?

Are not highly ornamented churches a sign of spiritual decay? Misdirected wealth?

Was ever a grand church built but with a large mixture of the aim of the builders of the tower of Babel. To leave a name? A. B. C.

THE Rev. Dr. McCosh has tendered his resignation as President of Princeton College, Princeton, N.J. He was formerly Professor of Logic and Metaphysics in Queen's College, Belfast. In 1868 he resigned and accepted the Presidency of Princeton College. Dr. McCosh intends to devote his time to philosophic research.

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