

is very active. There the forces of good and evil are concentrated and there the great conflict is most intense, but the Devil does not overlook the quiet country district, or keep away from the remotest hamlet. In town and in country there is earnest work to be done. The needs of men are the same, and the one grand divine remedy for the sins and sorrows of humanity is of universal as well as local application. The advantages are not all on one side. There are compensations everywhere. Crossing a bridge overlooking the Cowgate in Edinburgh, said one who has done and is still doing substantial mission work in India, to a friend as they were walking together, "I am equally willing to go down to work in that crowded street or to go to India, just as God calls me." That certainly is the spirit in which the sacred work of the ministry should be undertaken. Men of even very ordinary capacity who are so influenced are not likely to turn out failures wherever they are.

Men of exceptional ability and of corresponding adaptiveness usually find their way into the leading centres of activity. To this no one with any show of reason can possibly object. It is a matter of rejoicing that such is the case, but it is a mistake to suppose that all the best men are transferred to city charges and that only indifferent and mediocre pastors are permitted to remain in the country. Dr. Pirie Smith was recognized as a man of sterling worth, a faithful pastor and a preacher of unusual force and earnestness. Whenever he preached to congregations other than his own his discourses were felt to be plain and simple expositions and enforcements of Gospel truth of more than ordinary impressiveness. Whether the ambition to stand in the front rank had been repressed or was absent, he remained for a life time the respected and revered pastor of a quiet country congregation and left behind him the impress of solid and lasting work done for the advancement of the divine glory and the highest moral and spiritual welfare of those entrusted to his care. In this respect he was by no means singular. Throughout Canada, as in other lands, the great work of the Church is not all done in cities. Men of varied gifts and high character minister from week to week to small country congregations in which are being reared many who will be equipped for devoted and intelligent service here and hereafter. In earlier days there was great zeal for Presbyterian parity. It is held still, theoretically at least, and no one would care to deny that it has been a source of strength to the Presbyterian Church; it is evident, however, that there are influences forming that are not altogether favourable to the Scriptural statement concerning those specially engaged in Christ's service—"All ye are brethren."

#### PREACHING—ITS PLACE AND POWER.

ATTENTION was recently called to President Patton's estimate of preaching and what ought to be its leading characteristics in relation to the age. The question of Church service is one that is attracting not a little attention at the present time. There are some who declare that the pulpit as a power to influence human thought and action is fast approaching decay and that preaching will soon be numbered among the lost arts. Many are not prepared to go so far as this; but they are querulous in their criticisms of the pulpit, and the opinions of objectors are nearly about as varied as are the objectors themselves. The most popular objection in many quarters at present is to what is styled dogmatic preaching, though possibly some of the complainants might not be ready just at once to give a definition of the term they so frequently and familiarly employ. It might well be asked, Is it possible that, in one sense, there can be preaching without dogma? Christian dogma is the statement of positive truth revealed in Scripture. If the positive preaching of Gospel truth is rejected what else would be left for the pulpit to declare? Coleridge in his young and Unitarian days, it is true, once preached on the hair-powder tax, but such uses of the pulpit would scarcely meet the approbation of the most decided opponent of dogmatic preaching. The matter of Gospel preaching may be dogmatic or doctrinal, but there may not be, there ought not to be, dogmatism in the manner and tones of the preacher.

Evangelical preaching must still busy itself chiefly with the great cardinal doctrines that from the apostolic age to the present have survived all the changed conditions of national and social life. There are doubtless adaptations and applications of unchanging principles to ever-varying conditions and to ever-constant human needs, but truth itself, in all its essential features, is permanent, and this

is its evidence as well as its utility. If there is no authoritative standard by which religious truth in its leading lines at least may be tested, and from which we may be able to derive convictions of its value, then definite rules for the conduct of life and well-grounded hope for the soul's redemption and a blessed immortality would be left in the vague uncertainty. All who accept the Scriptures as the inspired Word of God, however they may differ in regard to methods of interpretation and theorize as they may concerning matters of comparatively minor importance, are substantially agreed as to the main facts relating to Christ's redemptive and saving work. However much the parrot-like repetition of truths generally received by Gospel hearers may be condemned, while the merely formal and perfunctory reiteration of stereotyped doctrinal statement is to be carefully avoided by every faithful minister of Jesus Christ, the great truths of Scripture that directly bear on the way of salvation ought to have a prominent place in public teaching. These truths must be firmly grasped, intelligently held and proclaimed with fervid earnestness and in a spirit of heart-felt affection if they are to have their legitimate influence on the minds and hearts of hearers.

The principles of eternal truth are capable of the most complete adaptation to the almost endlessly diversified conditions of human existence. The preaching to the times, so much in demand, is no impossible task to the minister who has an intelligent apprehension of the special characteristics of the times in which he lives. He may draw his illustrations from common life, the teaching of history, the endlessly diversified world of nature, but the principles that ought to guide and govern human action are to be found in the sure word of prophecy to which we do well to take heed. In the nature of the case there is no reason for the cry that the office of the Christian pulpit is to be classed among those things that are waxing old and ready to vanish away. It has an important place to fill and there is no other agency to supplant it.

Important as is the place of preaching it is not the sole part of public religious service. Preaching should be reverent, devotional in spirit. It ought to be such as to elevate the entire spiritual nature and bring it into harmony with those acts that constitute an essential part of public worship. Praise and prayer are means by which the soul is brought near to God. The devout worshipper feels his need for humble confession of sin; he longs for forgiveness and is deeply conscious that earnest as human effort and ardent desire for spiritual enrichment may be, without the aid of divine grace they are unavailing. He is also conscious that it is a high privilege as well as an incumbent duty to join intelligently in the expression of his gratitude and in voicing the holiest aspirations of the soul in the service of song. It looks as if it were too often the case that praise, prayer and Scripture reading were only preludes to the sermon, and in themselves of secondary importance to the discourse which occupies the chief place in the services of the Protestant Church. Less than due attention is given to what is in reality one of the essential parts of divine worship. If as is generally recognized preparation for the pulpit is one of the duties a faithful minister may not neglect, no less is it true that careful preparation ought to be made for the devotional services of the sanctuary.

Then that the pulpit may worthily hold the place assigned to it for the advancement and the defence of the Gospel, its aims must be practical. Doctrines are to be proclaimed, but it ought also to be clearly shown that they have a meaning for each and for all. The unhappy disparity between profession and practice—confessedly great, greater by far than it ought to be—might be much lessened could Gospel hearers be aroused from the delusion only too common that religion and practical life occupy two distinct spheres. Is there not a vague impression in some men's minds that external religious duties ought to be attended to on Sabbath and at other stated times, but that religious principles are not strictly compatible with buying and selling and the ordinary concerns of everyday life? This divorce of profession and practice might be largely removed by the faithful application of Christian truth in its immediate bearing on man's whole nature. If the pulpit has not the fulness of power it ought to have, it certainly has its place in this as in every age of the world's history.

It was feared that the funds might not be forthcoming for the purchase by the Bible Society of the Fry collection of British Bibles, the finest in the world, but by the energetic efforts of Dr. Wright in procuring subscriptions the fear has been disappointed and the priceless treasure is now safely deposited on the shelves of the Bible House in Queen Victoria Street.

## Books and Magazines.

LITTELL'S LIVING AGE. (Boston: Littell & Co.)—Whatever is newest and of general interest in current literature appears in the pages of *Littell*.

OUR LITTLE ONES AND THE NURSERY. (Boston: The Russell Publishing Co.) Bright and entertaining, as well as instructive, this finely printed and illustrated little monthly is a great favourite with little people.

ST. NICHOLAS. (New York: The Century Co.)—Attractive as this admirable monthly for young people usually is, the number for April has a variety of subjects in which young readers are interested. The adaptation and style of treatment and the number and beauty of the illustrations are all that could be desired.

HARPER'S YOUNG PEOPLE. (New York: Harper & Brothers.) This old established favourite with young people comes every week laden with good things in the shape of instructive, entertaining and refining literature plentifully and well illustrated, such as can be very highly appreciated by the class for which it is especially designed.

THE METHODIST MAGAZINE. (Toronto: William Briggs.)—As a frontispiece this magazine gives this month a fine likeness of the late Dr. Williams, Superintendent of the Methodist Church in Canada. The opening paper is "Memorials of Dr. Williams," by Rev. A. Cairn, D.D., and Rev. E. H. Dewar, D.D. The editor continues his interesting series, "Canadian Tourist Party in Europe," which is finely illustrated. Lady Brassey's "The Last Voyage" and "Vagabond Vignettes" are continued. The usual features found in the magazine are well sustained.

HARPER'S MAGAZINE. (New York: Harper & Brothers.)—Mr. Andrew Lang opens the April number of *Harper* with "Comments on the 'Merchant of Venice,'" and *ad hoc* of this a likeness of Shylock full of character, appears as frontispiece. "Thomas Young, M.D., F.R.S.," by Rev. William Henry Milburn gives an account of the life and work of that eminent scholar. The "Great American Industries" series has reached the ninth paper, which explains all about a "Suit of Clothes." General Wesley Merritt tells the story of "Three Indian Campaigns." "The New York Maritime Exchange" and "American Literary Comedians," with the serial by William Dean Howells, several good stories and poems, together with the departments, make up an excellent number.

SCRIBNER'S MAGAZINE. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.)—For frontispiece *Scribner* presents its readers with an illustration suggested by an ode of Horace, Book I. 4. It is to be followed by a series by an eminent English artist, J. R. Weguelin. "Tadmor in the Wilderness" is a paper of decided interest written by Frederick Jones Bliss, who possesses keen powers of observation and graphic description. The illustrations of this paper are very fine. The first of a series of papers on "The Rights of the Citizen" deals with that respected individual, "As a Householder." It is promised men of eminence will contribute to this series, and that it will be written in untechnical language. Readers will also find the papers on "The Electric Railway of To Day," "In the Footprints of Charles Lamb," and "Wagnerianism and the Italian Opera" of great interest. Octave Thanet's serial, "Expiation," is concluded in this number, but Harold Frederic's "In the Valley" still holds its course. There are short stories by writers who have earned deserved fame in this department of literary endeavour, poems by Charles Edwin Markham and Charles Henry Lüders, and "The Point of View," altogether making an excellent number of a deservedly popular monthly magazine.

THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY. (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co.)—Civil Service Reform in the United States has a champion in Mr. Oliver T. Morton, who, in a paper called "Some Popular Objections to Civil Service Reform," which appears in the *Atlantic* for April, is not afraid to say that the spoils system "is at war with equality, freedom, justice, and a wise economy, and is already a doomed thing fighting extinction. Its establishment was in no sense a popular resolution, but was the work of a self-willed man of stubborn and tyrannical nature, who had enemies to punish and debts to pay." Mr. James' "Tragic Mute" is drawing to a conclusion. The picture of the recalcitrant lover, who is not willing to sacrifice his worldly prospects to the dramatic art to which he professes to be a devotee, is a powerful piece of character-drawing. Dr. Helms, in "Over the Teacups," talks about modern realism, and says that the additions which have been made by it "to the territory of literature consist largely in swampy, malodorous, ill-smelling patches of soil which had previously been left to reptiles and vermin." After falling foul of a romance which has been lately quoted by a brother-author as "a work of austere morality," he says: "Leave the descriptions of the drains and cesspools to the hygienic specialist, and the details of the laundry to the washerwoman." Mr. Aldrich has a poem on "The Poet's Corner," and Mrs. Deland's serial leaves the hero face to face with another problem. There are many other good things in the number.

THE HITTITES. Their Inscriptions and their History. By John Campbell, M.A. (Toronto: Williamson & Co.)—This massive and erudite work in two volumes is about ready for publication. In it are embodied the patient and persevering research of twenty years by Professor Campbell, of Montreal, a gentleman eminently fitted by taste and capability, general and special, for the monumental task he has undertaken. In the preface the author states that its usefulness to the student of the Bible, of ancient history, and of anthropological service in all its branches, may appear from the fact that it embraces a translation of all the legible Hittite inscriptions, ten in number, now read for the first time, with grammatical analysis and historical notes; a connection, by means of an ancient Hittite document, of sacred and profane history, from the dispersion of mankind till the fall of the kingdom of Israel; a chronologically amended history of Egypt, Palestine, Babylonia, Assyria and Medo-Persia; an account of the origin of Aryan institutions and empire; the history of Hittite dispersion in Europe and Asia; and the story of the peopling of the American continent. The work is looked for with keen interest.