

## THEOLOGY AND THE PULPIT.

For a generation past there has been a disposition to disparage and largely to discard what is called "doctrinal preaching." The very word *theology* in many quarters has been stigmatized and put under the ban, and men and women have grown up educated to regard it as entirely distinct from religion, if not injurious to it.

The unfortunate effect of this is manifest to-day in more ways than one. Even among the church-going public, and among those classed as intelligent in other lines, can be often seen a crudity and inexpertness in religious thinking which is amazing. Old errors, revamped and freshly labeled, are taken as improved modern views. New errors, the veriest puerilities, often mere crotchets and distortions in religious speculation, are advocated, and impressionable people, "unskilful in the world of righteousness," if not deluded and led away by them, are at least unable to show where they are wrong. Neglect of training in the things which "man is to believe concerning God" has left many who bear the name of Christ in the "condition of children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness." One of the great English quarterlies once remarked that "to disregard doctrine is either the work of childishness or senility, of faculties too immature or too decaying to thing." And so unconversant are many to-day in regard to this that they have no other conception of doctrinal sermons than that they are either the mere dry bones of theology and cold didactics, or else controversial and pugnacious treatises. But the question of method and manner in such preaching is altogether apart. Sermons on the great themes of theology may be as much a thing of life and glow and tenderness as those on subjects of a different class.

Let it be remembered, further, that if the orthodox pulpit is neglecting theology, the so-called liberal preachers are by no means following our example. Their preaching largely pertains to the great questions of religious belief. While not always making affirmative statements of their own creeds, they are zealously and pertinaciously aiming to discredit the views of the evangelical churches, and they seem animated by a spirit of bitter and uncompromising hostility. The divine authority of the Bible; the Godhood of Jesus Christ; the fallen state of man; the guilt of sin, and its penalty; the atoning sacrifice on the cross, and the way of salvation by faith—these are the subjects on which, or rather against which, they are constantly preaching. Is it an illustration of "wiser in their generation than the children"?—*Herald and Presbyterian*.

## NEVER IN VAIN.

No message of love to God and man has ever been in vain; no love of man or God has ever perished from the universe: no life of love has ever been or ever can be lost. This is the only infinite and only eternal message, and this is why the mission and the message of Jesus of Nazareth must abide. This is the reason that the life of Jesus is eternal, and that all things must be subdued unto Him; for "love never faileth, but whether there be prophecies, they shall be done away, whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge it shall be done away. For we know in part and we prophecy in part; but when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away. . . . For now I see in a mirror, darkly; but then face to face; now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I have been known." . . .

And when at last we shall clearly know what now we dimly see in Jesus Christ—that "love is righteousness in action;" that mercy is the necessary instrument of justice; that good has "been the final goal of ill;" and that through testing innocence must have been glorified into virtue—when we shall see that God is love and law is Gospel, and sin has been transformed into righteousness, then shall we also see that "there is one body, and one Spirit, even as also we were called in one hope of our calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all."

Then shall we see that "unto each one of us was the grace given according to the measure of the gift of Christ;" . . . and we shall all "attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ;" and

"Every kindred, every tribe,  
On this terrestrial ball,  
To Him all majesty ascribe,  
And crown Him Lord of all."

## SOMETHING LIKE PERSEVERANCE.

Perseverance and industry are looked upon as excellent qualities in these days, but in the early centuries such virtues

were by no means conspicuous by their absence. This is amply proved by the fact that every copy of a book circulated prior to the invention and use of printing had to be produced by hand-writing. The monks in their solitary vigils were as industrious as bees in making copies of manuscripts, to those recluses we of these latter times owe no mean debt of gratitude.

The Bible was, perhaps, copied more frequently than any other work. The fourth and fifth centuries seem to have been particularly productive in this respect; many of the most magnificent specimens of illuminated manuscripts were executed during the period mentioned. A writer of these manuscript Bibles, it is recorded, actually wrote the entire Gospels in letters of gold. It was no uncommon thing for monks to isolate themselves from the world and the things thereof and devote almost the whole of their times to this description of work. *Guide de Jars*, was a producer of these handwritten copies of the Scriptures, a beautiful specimen of whose work was sold along with the books of Sir W. Burrell in 1790. This single book had occupied half a century in its production. A note in the front of the manuscript, in Jars' handwriting, indicates that he began his task in 1244, and did not conclude it till 1294! This striking and unique instance of patience and steady plodding should be indeed the writing on the wall for the inspiration of the young of all time.

## LOOKS INTO BOOKS.

## MAGAZINE ARTICLES YOU SHOULD READ.

"The Stability of Truth." By President D. S. Jordan, in "Popular Science Monthly."

"The Famine in India." By Sir Edwin Arnold, in "North American Review."

"Her Majesty Queen Victoria." A Study of the Longest Reign in British History. By W. T. Stead, in "The Review of Reviews."

"The Banderium of Hungary." By Richard Harding Davis, in "Scribners."

"Nelson at Trafalgar." By Capt. Alfred T. Mahan, in "The Century."

"Astronomical Progress of the Century." By Henry Smith Williams, M. D., in "Harper's Monthly."

"How to Write a Short Story." A Symposium. By Robert Barr, Harold Frederic, Arthur Morrison and Jane Barlow, in "The Bookman."

"A Marble City—The Tennessee Centennial Exposition." By Charles H. Sebastian, in "The National Magazine."

"Rudyard Kipling as a Poet." By W. D. Howell, in "McClure's."

"The Blind and Their Achievements." By Rev. J. S. Seymour, in "The Methodist Magazine."

The *Pulpit* is a homiletical magazine published in Cleona, Pa., at \$1.25 a year, which confines itself to giving complete sermons. The January number contains five, including one by F. B. Meyer, of London. It also contains portraits and biographical sketches of the preachers.

The *Preachers' Magazine* for February opens with a sermon from Dr. Watson (Ian MacLaron) on enthusiasm. Mark Guy Pearse continues the "Story of Gideon," and the Rev. A. H. Walker his exposition on the "Parable of the Sower." Mr. John O. Havemeyer vindicates "Lay Preaching," and Joseph Parker gives a brief sermon for busy readers on the "Three Hands of a Watch." The Rev. Montague Powell explains for the children the Message of the Church Steeple. Wilbur B. Ketchum, 2 Cooper Union, New York. \$1.50 a year.

## THE FEDERAL LIFE COMPANY.

The fifteenth annual statement of the Federal Life Assurance Company is printed in another part of this paper. A study of the report shows that the company is doing a safe, solid and altogether satisfactory business. During the year covered by the report 1,496 applications were accepted for \$2,085,050; the assets of the company were increased by \$107,938.91 during the year, and now amount to more than \$600,000. During the year death claims to the amount of \$94,620 were paid on the lives of thirty-six persons. When the general dullness of business during the year is taken into consideration, the statement of this company's operations must be considered to be most satisfactory. If you are concerned in life assurance—and if you are not you should be—you will do well to read the report.