

BOOKS AND MAGAZINES.

The Stenografik Teacher.

By John Brown Smith. Amherst, Mass.: J. B. and E. G. Smith.

This book is in its second edition. We do not doubt that it will be found very useful in educational establishments where Stenography is taught. It is well calculated for use as a class book, the lessons rising gradually from the simplest and most elementary to the most intricate. The latest improvements in the art of short-hand writing will be found here.

St. Nicholas.

New York: Scribner & Co.

The May "St. Nicholas" will contain no less than seven short stories, besides the two serials. Among the former will be the conclusion of Harriet Prescott Spofford's story of "The Boy Astronomer" and an astounding tale about a certain "Rudolph Don Pedro Livingstone," whose birth and adventures are said to be as lively as they are original.

American Health Primers.

Edited by W. W. Kean, M.D. Philadelphia: Lindsay & Blakiston.

From the published programme we are led to expect much from this series of books. The intention is to keep the prevention of disease in view more than the cure of it, and we have no doubt that such publications will assist in developing a public sentiment favourable to proper sanitary laws, especially in our large cities. It is stated that the following volumes are in the press, and that they will be issued at the rate of about one each month: (1) "Hearing and how to keep it;" (2) "Long Life and how to reach it;" (3) "Sea Air and Sea Bathing;" (4) "The Summer and its diseases;" (5) "Eyesight and how to care for it;" (6) "The Throat and the Voice;" (7) "The Winter and its Dangers;" (8) "The Mouth and the Teeth;" (9) "Our Homes;" (10) "The Skin in Health and Disease;" (11) "Brainwork and Overwork." The authors are men well known in the medical profession in the United States. Other volumes are said to be in preparation.

Scribner's Monthly.

New York: Scribner & Co.

From advance announcements forwarded by the publishers we are able to give our readers some idea of what the contents of the May number of Scribner will be. It will contain a frontispiece portrait of Oliver Wendell Holmes, which is thought to be, in some respects, the best of the series by Mr. Eaton and Mr. Cole. The sketch of Dr. Holmes will be by Francis H. Underwood, with illustrations. It will also contain a paper on the wharf life of New York under the title "A Day on the Docks," and from the pen of Charles H. Farnham, a name new to magazine covers. The writer is said to possess a fresh and sympathetic style and to have succeeded to a remarkable degree in presenting some of the most characteristic phases of metropolitan life. The paper will be charmingly illustrated. The first of the papers on Brazil, by Herbert H. Smith, will appear. It will describe Para, for which the writer predicts a brilliant future, and will contain suggestions about the commercial relations between the United States and Brazil. The illustrations are by Mr. Champney, who, it will be remembered, was the artist of the "Great South" series by Edward King, published in the same magazine in 1873-75. There will be an illustrated paper on "The New Museum in Rome," in which the Italian people and government are taking such an enthusiastic interest. Among the rich treasures of this museum are the statues of "Commodus as Young Hercules," of "Commodus as Hercules," and of "Urania," the terra-cotta bass-relief of "The Parting of Theseus and Ariadne," a bronze thensa or sacred car, a rhyton or drinking-horn of rare beauty, sculptured sarcophagi, etc.—all of which are reproduced in the illustrations. The subject has not before been treated in the magazines, we believe. A paper which bids fair to have much practical value as well as timeliness, is Mr. Samuel Parsons' "Village Lawn-Planting," in which is described an actual experiment with a lot of 50x150 feet, with passing suggestions on form, colour, varieties, grouping, and other details. Mr. Parsons is well known as one of the leading horticulturists in the country, and his place at Flushing, L.I., is said to contain many rare shrubs and trees, some of them having no duplicates on this continent or in Europe.

PASTORS, THEOLOGY, AND THE AGE.

What then should the pulpit do? Should it ignore the controversies of the day, and say nothing about the questions which are on the lips of thinking men? Very seriously some give this advice, and very sincerely do we think that they are mistaken. The pulpit has a magnificent opportunity in these days when all ears are open to hear whatever may be said on fundamental questions of belief, and the duties of the pulpit are commensurable with its opportunities. There is room for questioning whether it is not too often taken for granted that those who habitually hear the Gospel are troubled with no doubts and beset with no fears. But it would be hard to make a greater mistake. The duties of the pulpit cannot be performed, it is true, by preaching dry and lifeless theological formulas; but neither can they be performed by adopting a tone of uncertainty, timidity, and doubt regarding the great verities of our faith. If any one supposes that he can wisely keep aloof from controversy by divorcing faith from practice and preaching purely ethical discourses, let him ponder these words of one of our foremost anti-theistic thinkers: "The great desire of this age is for a Doctrine which may serve to condense our knowledge, guide our researches, and shape our lives, so that Conduct may be the consequence of Belief" (Lewes' "Problems of Life and Mind"). That faith and practice are inseparably connected is one of the common lessons of the evangelical pulpit; it is interesting to notice that it occupies such an honoured place in Mr. Lewes' volumes, and perhaps it will be better appreciated by us all, now that we are able to cite in support of it the grave sanction of a famous Positivist.

Whatever room for difference of opinion there may be in regard to the relations of the pulpit to prevailing error, there can be no reason to doubt that, in a purely didactic way, it should give a large place to doctrine. Of the preacher it should be said, as it was said of Christ, "He opened his mouth and taught them." We are frequently told that systematic theology rests on exegesis; but there are also many illustrations of the fact, that a sound exegesis is promoted by a study of systematic theology. There are instances, says Professor Flint—and perhaps this is one of them—where A is the cause of B, and B is the cause of A, paradoxical as it may appear. The men who ridicule theology, and tell us to preach the Word, are the very men who betray their own lack of theological training, by their crude and arbitrary, though often original interpretations of Scripture. It would be easy to cite examples of this false method where single words are torn from their connections, and quoted to support statements that contradict the analogy of faith; or where texts, strung together without any other bond of connection than their place in the columns of a concordance, are made the basis of unsound and absurd conclusions. Dogmatic theology is the cure for unsound exegesis, just as exegesis is our protection against merely speculative dogmatics.

No; we cannot get rid of theology. Men are perplexed; they want light. If there is a sounding-line which will go down to the depths of conscious life, they want it. If there is a generalization which will take cognisance of the facts of experience, they are in quest of it. If there is any way of voicing the world's unrest in an authorized and authoritative Litany, they are waiting to hear it. Christianity supplies their wants—nothing else will; and the formal statement of Christianity is Christian theology. It is a matter of regret that so many minds are turning away from Christian theology because it is an old subject, and because there are new fields which invite cultivation, and promises a larger harvest. Comparative theology has its lessons, no doubt, and some men may be professionally called to study it; but it is the theology of Christ and not of Confucius that we are commissioned to teach. Man that is born of woman has but a short time to live, and cannot afford to be tasting every muddy stream of religious thought, in order that he may the better appreciate the river of water of life which proceedeth out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. A comparative study of time-tables may be an excellent acquisition in its way, but the engineer who possessed it would find it a poor substitute for a minute acquaintance with the schedule of his own road. Even the study of the evidences of Christianity, important as it is, and even essential when one is professionally called to deal specifically with such subjects, may occupy too much of a minister's time.

Borderland studies are not the special and exclusive province of the pastor; and if some men deal too little with current questions of belief, others deal so exclusively with the apologetic side of Christian theology that they injure their general usefulness; they spend their whole time in making clean and clear the approaches to the temple, when their proper place is within the walls, and their proper function is to minister at its altar.

But there is much to encourage us in the prosecution of theological study on the side of dogmatics. A new theology is not needed, but new theologians are; and within the old lines of confessional orthodoxy there is ample room for fresh thought, and a rich reward for patient investigation. The doctrines are few, but there is a kaleidoscopic variety of combination. The pastor is preaching, let us say, on the resurrection of Christ. Well, it is but a step from the empty grave of Jesus to the throned glory of humanity. *Cur Deus homo?* Has all been said that can be said in answer to Anselm's famous question? I do not know; but it is safe to say that no one who has pondered much on the doctrine of the incarnation, can regard "*I want to be an angel*" as a valuable contribution to the hymnology of the Church.—*Professor Patton in the "Catholic Presbyterian."*

CHURCH EXPENSES.

A ministers' club on one occasion discussed the question, "How to meet church expenses." "Meet church expenses?" said one, "why, pay them like honest men and good Christians, as you would the expenses of your own household. Exercise all reasonable economy. Do not go into extravagance for show or to gratify pride, and then as much expect to pay your 'church expenses' as you do those for your food and raiment. It is a very plain question, and can be only answered one way: *No church has a right to incur expenses which it cannot pay.*" The great trouble with "church expenses" is that they are often incurred regardless of the necessities of the case, and with little reference to the fear of God. The expenses of preaching the gospel to the poor are not necessarily so onerous as many suppose. It does not appear that our Saviour and His disciples had great trouble in paying "church expenses," though their treasurer sometimes seemed to have some difficulty in making his accounts balance. If the expenditures for vain and empty show, and pomp and pride be dispensed with, and churches come down somewhere in the region of what is necessary and comfortable, instead of trying to excel each other in the height of spires, the splendour of architecture, or a first-class organ, there will be less heard about the difficulty of meeting expenses, and fewer churches will be burdened with debt. The fact is, a great portion of the expenses which so heavily burden the churches of the present day are incurred in direct opposition to the Word of God and the spirit of the Gospel. The churches can never expect the blessing of God to attend them or assist them in the incurring such expenses as these. With the enormous outlay of money for purposes of vain show, comes the necessity of winning the favour of the rich, whether godly or ungodly, so as to saddle upon them the charges resulting from these worldly practices.

Covetousness, greed, and hardness of heart, keep company with pride, vanity, and empty show; and churches which despise the lowly path of humility and obedience, as they become proud, become covetous and unwilling to recognize their responsibility to their Creator, or to pay their fair and righteous proportion of the expense necessary to carry forward this work. In consequence, when churches become honey-combed with worldliness and pride, and hide-bound with the love of sordid gain, we find the expenses forced up to the highest point, and the offerings diminished in a spirit of covetous meagreness. Then arises the great question, "How to meet church expenses."

Let the principles of Christianity sway the lives of men; let the Church put aside her pride; let ministers and office-bearers set the example of self-denial and of trust in God, and, as in the wilderness the people offered for God's service until they had enough and to spare for every needed purpose, so to-day, when the love of money gives place to the love of God, the people will offer willingly; and, instead of ministers coming together to enquire how to meet church expenses, sinners will gather, asking, "What shall I do to be saved?"—"R." in *Weekly Review*.