

Freshness in Themes and Treatment.

It has long been the policy of THE HOMILETIC REVIEW to secure the freshest possible discussion of topics of current interest. It largely avoids the publication of matter not prepared for its own pages, and seeks to secure productions from the pens of specialists on timely topics suggested for their treatment. The reader will find an illustration of what we mean in Dr. Cunningham Geikie's article on "Local Aids to Pulpit Realism." Dr. Geikie wrote it at our request immediately after his return from Palestine and with all the physical features of the land vividly in mind. That fits it to be a revelation to many. We have just received by mail an article by Professor Sayce of Oxford, right from Egypt where he spends a large part of every year—in which the subject is "Light on the Pentateuch from Egyptology,"—and which will appear at an early day. This is the general policy of the REVIEW.

Church and State.

It is hardly possible at the present time to emphasize too strongly the necessity in our own country of the complete separation of church and state. That is a vital point in our national organization. The organic union of the two has always been a curse to both. And we can not help regarding any organized movement of the church along purely political lines as fraught with danger to all concerned. The attempt of the state to control the church led to the great persecutions and oppressions of the early centuries. The attempt of the church to control the state organized the Inquisition with all its Satanic enginery. The same courses now would result in like evils.

There is equal reason to emphasize the duty of Christians, not as church-members, but as Christian citizens, not operating through church organizations, which are for spiritual ends, but by civic and national agencies adapted to political ends, to throw themselves

into the work of purifying the corrupt political mass and leavening it with Christian principles. For political ends the "primary" is only less important than the prayer-meeting for spiritual ends; and ministers and leading Christians should take an interest in the former as well as in the latter. We hope to have a discussion soon of this general subject, by some of the ablest writers of the day, and also of its special bearings upon the questions of the minister's duty with regard to the drink question, municipal and civic reforms, etc.

Is There a Legal Limit to False Teaching in Morals?

It is becoming a very grave practical question, How far shall skeptics be permitted to carry teaching that must inevitably undermine morality, individual and public? It is claimed in the name of "freedom of speech," that no limit ought to be set to such utterances, and practically there has been no limit to them. Huxley and Tyn-dall have been permitted to exploit their crude notions of man as a "voluntary automaton," and the consequent assumption that the criminal is really just as responsible for his actions as the windmill on the hill; and Robert G. Ingersoll, to gain notoriety by proving that suicide is not wrong. We are already far on the way in reaping the harvest of crime of which such men have been sowing the seed. Only a few days since a reckless and notorious forger, having been overtaken by justice, committed suicide in one of our city prisons, leaving behind him a letter stating that he had been reading Mr. Ingersoll's argument and was satisfied that suicide was right and not a crime. Is there no legal limit to such demoralizing teaching?

Society is some day going to wake up to the truth that true freedom consists in "the liberty to do as one pleases so long, and so long only, as it pleases one to do right."